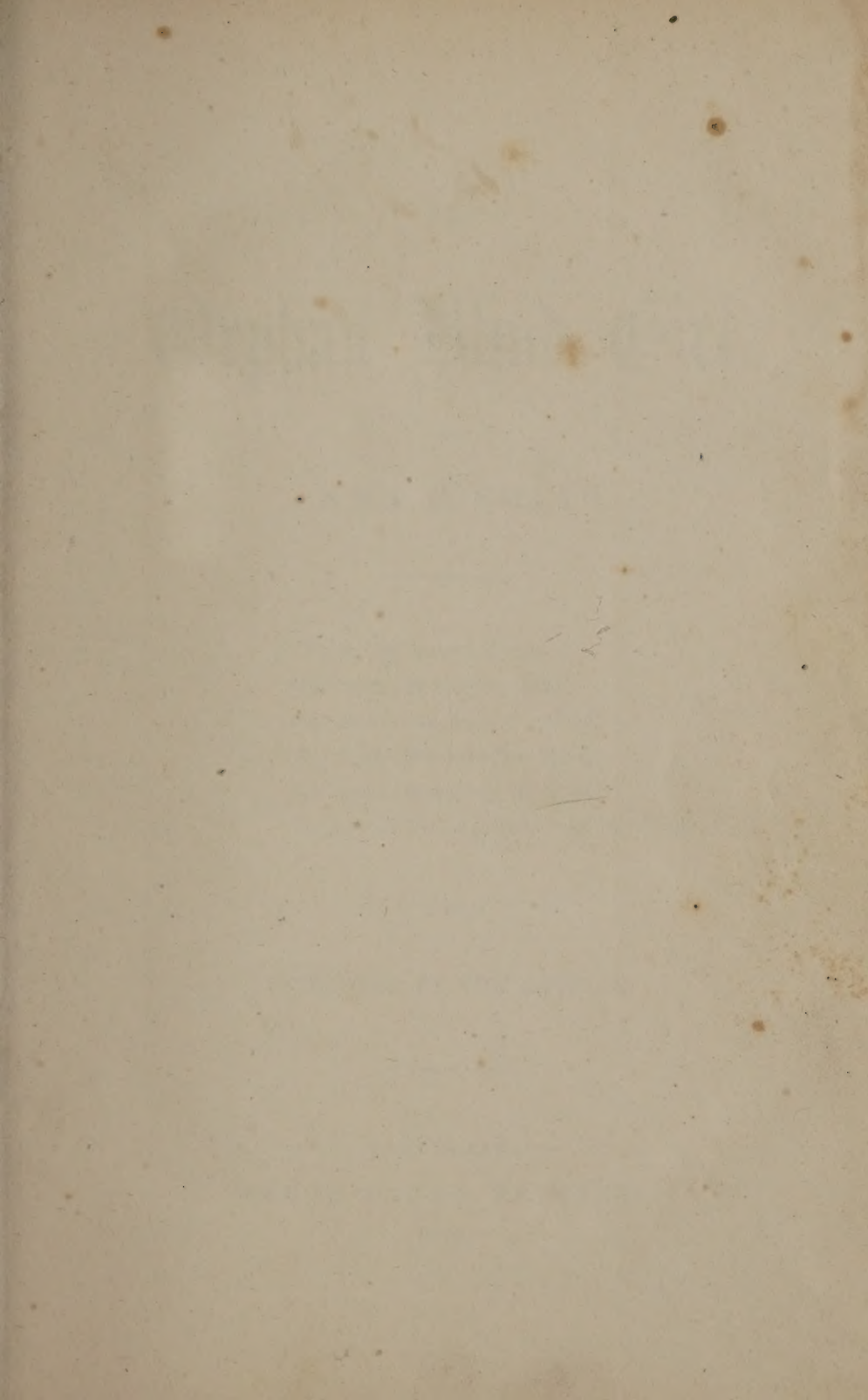


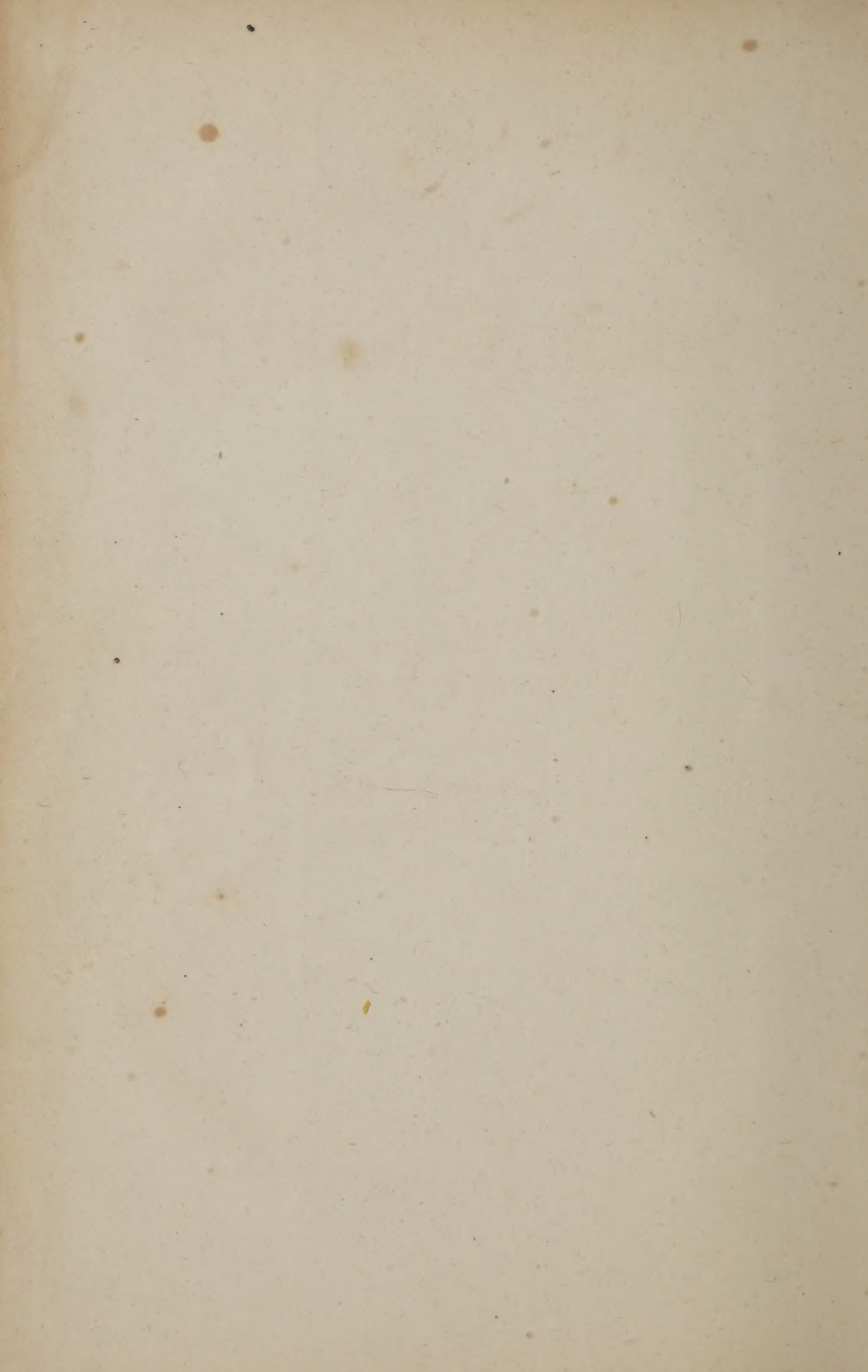


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HOUSE FOR THE BLIND**









THE
Orphan Blind Girl.

BY
ANNA C. SMITH.

"It is not of outward sound
Of breeze, or singing bird;
But wondrous melody refined,
A gift of God unto the blind,
An inward harmony of mind,
By inward senses heard."—MARY HOWITT.

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TO

B. F. NEWCOMER, Esq.,

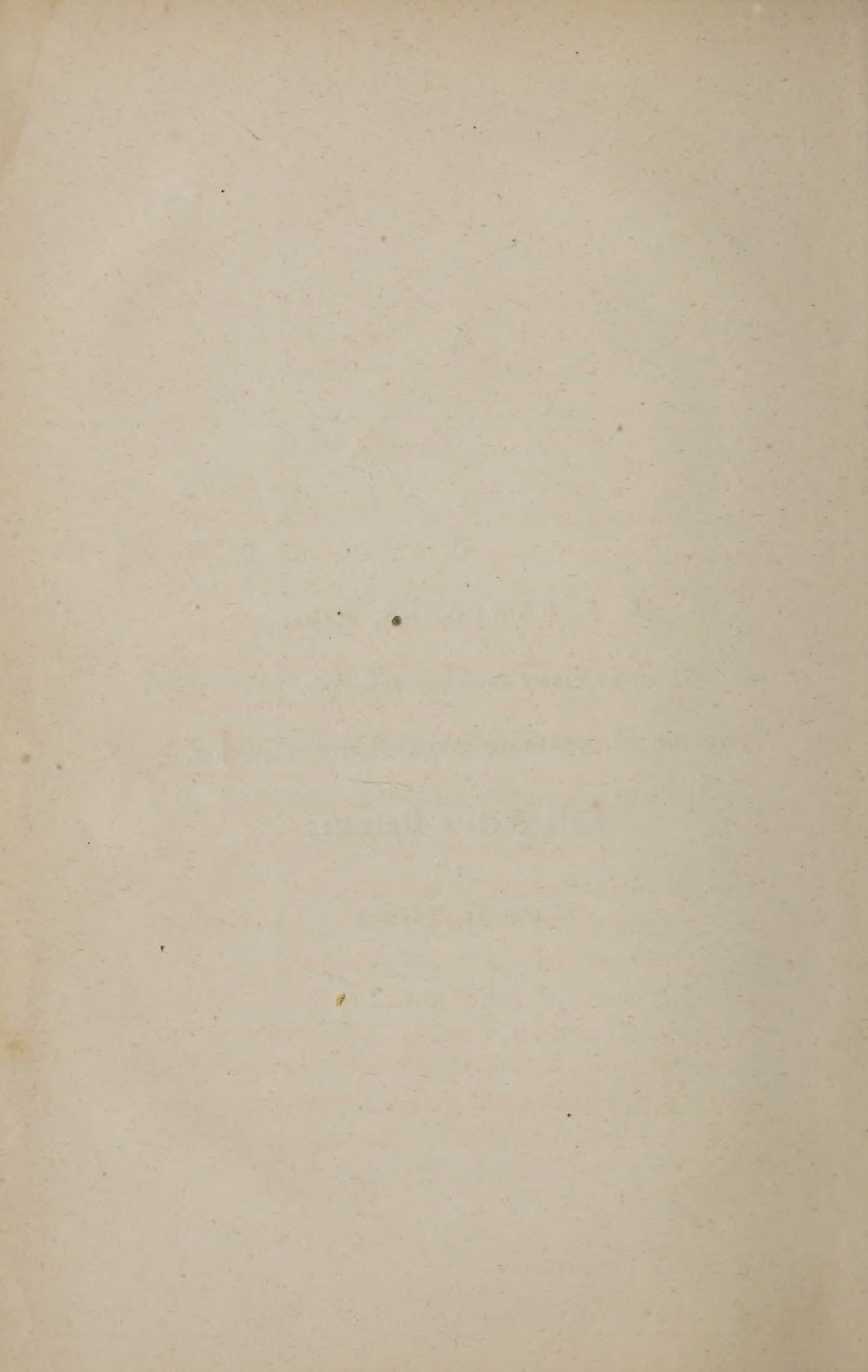
MY WORTHY AND ESTEEMED FRIEND,

FOR HIS DISINTERESTED KINDNESS TO THE AUTHOR,

This Little Volume

IS

Respectfully Dedicated



P R E F A C E .

In presenting this little volume to the public, it is not the purpose of the author to draw out a story to a tedious length, but in simple narrative to depict the facts of her past life.

Many and various have been the vicissitudes through which she has passed, but in the midst of it all, she has bowed with humble submission to His will, who is "too wise to err, too good to be unkind;" well knowing that "light shineth out of darkness," and that she has a Father in heaven, who is watching over her, and without whose knowledge, not a sparrow falleth to the ground.

In our hours of loneliness, the mind instinctively turns within itself for amusement; and who is it, that at some period of their experience has not felt this dreary helplessness sweep over their hearts? Even you, gentle reader

whose privilege it is to gaze with wonder and admiration upon the many works of nature and art, whose eye turns, ever and anon, from one to another of the noble structures of God's handiwork; is it any wonder that one who is destined to muse in darkness, should draw upon the mind for those resources which have otherwise been denied her? It is to your sympathies and generous natures that we would appeal in behalf of these simple pages, sent out before the world, feeling confident, that to a sympathizing community we shall not appeal in vain for one to whose sightless eyes there is no sky, no sun, no valley, or mountain; naught but one great interminable ocean of darkness.

There is a perfume of flowers upon the air, but they sit enveloped in their wrappings; she may picture them in pink, blue or purple, but she cannot discern their whereabouts, and were it not for these mental diversions, she would be lonely indeed; which, while they serve to beguile many a tedious hour, may also enable her to draw from them a comfortable independence.

And now, kind friends and patrons, our task is done; a pleasing one, we acknowledge it to have been, and abiding by His promise, who has said, "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and it shall return to you after many days," we leave the result with you.

M. A. L.




THE ORPHAN BLIND GIRL.

CHAPTER I.

"My heart presents her gifts; in turn of thee
I ask a little time, an idle hour,
Kindly to spend with these my thoughts and me."

Tupper.

O voyage on sea or in life, is free from vicissitudes, yet the same changes do not happen to all, nor do all suffer the same or equal reverses. Our barks are abroad on the wide surface of existence, and some experience more severe and frequent storms, or more baffling winds than others; for some the gales of prosperity appear to blow (we may say) tropically, so fair and steady is the course of fortune into which they seem to have fallen, while others appear to have encountered, almost at the outset, an unfavorable wind, which has opposed and persecuted them to the very end; and so was life's young morn to me, my

little bark was scarcely launched upon the billowy ocean of existence, e'er it was assailed by a storm-cloud, and driven ashore upon the rocks, which too often are known to wreck the hopes of the orphan.

Deprived of a fond father's care before my infant tongue had learned to lisp his name, a delicate bud left to bloom under the guidance of a tender mother, too fragile to bear up under the keen blasts which the tempests of adversity showered upon her ; she, too, was engulfed in the overwhelming tides, and I, like the shipwrecked mariner, tossed upon the lone island of orphanage. But God, who "tempers the winds to the shorn lamb" was pleased in his mercy, to shed the sunbeams of kindness over the wintry desert, causing flowers and evergreens here and there to spring up on either side of the pathway of my earthly pilgrimage.

My parents were natives of Staffordshire, England. My mother's maiden name was Groves, and her family were consistent members of the Society of Friends, of high standing in their social position, and were also

wealthy. My father's family belonged to the Church of England, by which ceremony my parents were united. My mother afterwards became a member of the same church. This circumstance caused dissensions, and led to estrangements which lasted many years.

My father was a mason by trade, and was also extensively engaged in the manufacture of nails.

They remained in England some years after their marriage, during which time they had several children, all of whom died young excepting their eldest, a daughter, around whom their fondest affections entwined. Time glided smoothly and prosperously on, and in their darling Sarah, they day after day discovered fresh buds of promise; but who can stay the hand of death, or ward off the threatening blow? Sixteen bright summers had scarcely passed, and she was ripening in all the beauties of innocence and grace, when the fell destroyer came. Death is at all times and under all circumstances terrible, even when warned of the approach of the dread monster by slow and measured steps; but when with

one grasp of his icy fingers, he snatches away the gay, buoyant and youthful, whose pen is adequate to describe the scene which he leaves behind.

At the close of a beautiful summer's evening, my mother was sitting at the window sewing, and drinking in the sweetest drafts of pleasure from the lively conversation of her rosy cheeked, blooming daughter, when she saw my father approaching the house, accompanied by a strange gentleman. My mother laid aside her sewing and went out to meet and welcome her husband. My sister, whose pleasure it ever was to lighten the burden of household duties, which would otherwise have devolved upon her parents, ran off with the playfulness of a fawn to the kitchen, to have supper prepared for the family, and the strange guest. A few moments only had elapsed when a wild, terrific scream burst upon the air, and Sarah was seen running towards her parents enveloped in flames. In attempting to remove the teakettle from the range with her apron, her clothes had caught fire; alarm soon spread, and a crowd was at-


tracted to the spot, among whom were all the workmen from the nail manufactory at the lower end of the yard. They finally succeeded in extinguishing the flames, but the grim tyrant had done its work; and after eleven days of the most intense suffering, marked by the most calm and placid resignation, my mother saw her lovely bud of promise, borne away to bloom in climes celestial:

“ And the mother gave, in tears and pain,
The flowers she most did love;
She knew she would find them all again
In the fields of light above.”

CHAPTER II.

"The soul, after soaring for awhile around the cloud-capped
Andes of reflection,
Glad in its conscious immortality, leaveth a world behind
To dare at one bold flight the broad Atlantic."

Tupper.

FTER this, my father was not satisfied in the home where his parental hopes had been thus suddenly cut off; and wherever he turned, he met something to remind him of his lost Sarah; the flowers she had planted, the birds she had tended, each in their own language sent a thrill like a pointed arrow to his heart, and he determined to close his business and emigrate to America.

Upon my mother the effect was different; she would gladly have remained among those scenes, the foot-prints of her sorrow; but clinging to her husband as the ivy does to the oak, and relying upon his better judgment,

she smilingly acquiesced ; and, with a tear trembling upon her eye-lid, she saw him embark for the New World, and promised to follow him as soon as he had prepared a home for her. I have often heard her dwell upon this separation as one of the most bitter trials of her life.

During her husband's absence, she made an effort to effect a reconciliation with her friends, who resided some distance from her. She wrote to them several times, but received no answers, nor was she ever able to ascertain whether or not her letters were received. This circumstance added a fresh pang to her sensitive heart ; she was in daily expectation of a summons from her husband to join him in a foreign land, and her heart yearned for one more tender touch of those parental lips, one more soft pressure of those hands, that had tended to all her infantile wants, but the stern mandate had gone forth.

Dissappointed in this attempt, her thoughts went out in prayerful aspirations across the deep blue sea, for a swift message from her fond husband who had now become doubly

dear to her. In her anxiety, dreary months dragged on, and at length the joyful tidings came.

A friend of my father's called upon her, with a cheering message from him, saying he was prosperous and happy, and should expect her in company with this friend and his family who were also going to try their fortunes in America. She had but little preparation to make, as she had been holding herself in readiness for this summons from the time of my father's departure; but there were sad duties to be performed; the parting with friends, the severing of social ties, the looking for the last time into eyes that beamed upon her many a joyful welcome; the listening to voices, eloquent and harmonious; the pressing of hands, which had to her so often spoken the warm heart's friendship; but, saddest of all, the last visit to the grave of her darling Sarah. It was at twilight, "when with the night wind's breath, the leaves all tremulous were, and hushed the sound of mirth and revelry," that she stood for the last time over the mound that covered the remains of her

precious child, her heart's cherished idol ; and often in her after-life has the memory of this twilight hour come back to her, mingling with it holy recollections of the past, and filling her soul with sweetest resignation. With this last sad office, her preparations were completed, and on a bright, clear, autumnal morning, in company with the worthy Mr., and his family, she sailed from Liverpool.

'Home, thy joys are passing lonely,
Joys no stranger's heart can tell,
Happy home, ah ! sure I love thee ;
Can I, can I say, farewell !
Can I leave thee ; can I leave thee !
Far in distant lands to dwell.'

Yes, she could leave home, country, and friends, brave the dangers of the sea, and seek an abiding place on a far distant shore ; for had she not said, in the language of one of old, "whither thou goest I will go, thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God."

The voyage was a tedious one, but the Captain and his crew lent their aid to render the passengers as comfortable as possible ; and what joy to those anxious hearts, when the

stately vessel, with her snowy sails spread out like wings, was borne by a fresh breeze, safely into the harbor New York.

My father was waiting to receive her, and a joyful meeting it was, for they had been separated for some years. Once more she was fondly pressed in a warm embrace to that loving heart, whose anxious throbbings told that she was dearer than ever before.

They remained in New York but a few days, as my father had purchased property in Pittsburg, with a view of settling there permanently; and after taking my mother to see the strange scenery of the Empire city, they started for their new home, which was a large hotel in the most business-like thoroughfare of the place. Of this she found herself mistress and sole proprietress, as this was the form of business which my father had fixed upon, and which proved very profitable; and here in this busy thoroughfare I first saw the morning's light, received the first parental kiss, and felt the first warm pressure of maternal affection; sweet, blissful, but short period of enjoyment; and oh! how my heart

carries me back to that green oasis in life's desert, unlocks the fondest memories of my soul, linked interminably with my sunniest hours ; to memories of eye-lids closed though unforgotten, which have, long ago sparkled their last love light ; of lips, silent and still, that have echoed in years gone by the joys of life's last laughter. Scarcely had I learned to distinguish my loved father's light footstep, and the sound of his musical voice as he hushed me to sleep upon his bosom, with the infant lullaby falling in soft cadence upon my ears, when his health began to fail, and in a few months he was confined to his room, which he never left again ; and when I was eleven months and five days old, my gentle mother wept a widow's woe. A widow—very sad is the sound of that word to me. It tells of blighted affections, trials, and sorrows, which none but those who have quaffed the bitter dregs of separation can realize, and the death knell of hope and love, comes booming afresh across my heart whenever I hear it spoken, and never fails to bring to mind those lines of Tupper

"Keep silence, daughter of frivolity,—for death is in that chamber.

Startle not with echoing sound that strangely solemn peace,
Death is here in spirit: a watcher by a marble corpse."

My mother felt her loss deeply, but she knew where to look for consolation. In this, her time of trouble, she remembered the promise of Him who says "I will be a father to the fatherless, and husband to the widow," and to Him she commended her little family, her lisping babe, and a son who had been her charge and solace during the separation from her husband, and her voyage across the deep.

After the funeral, the members of the Masonic Lodge, to which my father belonged, called upon my mother and advised her to continue the hotel, offering their aid and assistance in all emergencies; a promise faithfully adhered to. My father had made many friends in the home of his adoption, by his many kind acts, the influence of which shed a sweet halo around his memory, and extended to his wife and children when bereft of his care.

I met a gentleman in New York, a few years ago, who told me that he went to my father's house in Pittsburg when a poor boy about fifteen years of age, cold, hungry, and ragged, thrown upon the cold charities of the world; that his tale of woe was sufficient to awaken the sympathies of one who had never been known to turn a deaf ear to the voice of suffering, and in that house he had found a home and friends, and remained with them for some six or seven months; at the end of which time my father apprenticed him to a trade until he was twenty-one years of age, with a friend of his, claiming from that friend the most binding promises in his favor, and finished by adding, "I am now worth one hundred thousand dollars, all of which I owe to your father's kindness and generous care over me, and to him I shall always feel deeply indebted."

CHAPTER III.

"Behold of what delusive worth,
The bubbles we pursue on earth,
The shapes we chase,
Amid a world of treachery !
They vanish e'er death shuts the eye,
And leave no trace."—*Longfellow.*



YEAR and a half had now elapsed since my mother had put on widow's weeds, her business had gone on prosperously, and by her care and management she had proven herself to be a skillful and thrifty business woman. Although time had robbed her of many of the charms of youth, it had added many personal and mental attractions, which together with her flourishing prospects, drew around her a crowd of flatterers, one of whom, a Mr., one of her own countrymen, who had emigrated to America about ten years before, by his arts and sophistry soon made an impression upon her still

susceptible heart, and after twelve months acquaintance, she gave him her hand.

I was too young to realize that a serpent had entered our Eden and usurped my father's place in the earthly paradise, which his labors and industry had worked out for his children ; but after years brought with them the desolating truths. He remained in the home in Pittsburg, to which my mother had taken him, and had, during that time, been a very agreeable accession to the family circle, treating her and her children with the most marked respect and uniform kindness, and conducting the business, which had, as a matter of course, fallen into his hands, with skill ; but becoming restless, he commenced urging my mother to sell her property in Pittsburg and remove to Baltimore, holding out to her a variety of inducements, such as the eligibility of the latter city, and the influence in business that he could command there, owing to the many friends he possessed. My mother held out against his entreaties for some time, but forgetful of the maxim which Longfellow inculcates in one of his beautiful poems,

“Trust no Future, howe’er pleasant,
Let the dead Past bury its dead !
Act—act in the living present !
Heart within, and God o’er head,”

she at length yielded.

The property was sold, and with the largest part of the amount thus realized, my step-father started in bouyant spirits for Baltimore. A short time before the death of my father, my mother had received a letter from my grandmother in England, containing a check for five thousand dollars, intended for me ; this sum Mr. also took with him, promising to buy a house in Baltimore, and remove us thither. For three months she heard nothing of her absent husband, but finally a letter came bearing the Baltimore post-mark, informing her that he had prepared a comfortable home for her and her children, ending with many professions of anxiety and affection, and soliciting her following him at the earliest opportunity.

With a heavy heart she set about preparing for her journey. She was again to leave her home which had become endeared to her

by many pleasant associations, and go abroad among strangers.

We traveled as far as Philadelphia in our own conveyance. I remember little of this journey, excepting the white covered wagon in which we traveled, and of our stopping now and then to procure refreshments for ourselves, and feed for the horses. In Philadelphia my mother disposed of the horses and wagon, and took the boat for Baltimore, where we arrived in due time, very much fatigued, but cheered with the prospect of soon finding rest in our own comfortable home.

It would be a vain attempt to endeavor to picture her disappointment on finding that no home had been provided for us, and that her husband, the man into whose power she had given herself and helpless children, had squandered their father's hard earnings in gambling and dissipation. Aroused from a lethargy into which she seemed to have fallen, she determined to keep what little she had, in her own hands; and taking a house in her name, and getting together some comfortable furniture, she took us to it.

Mr., her husband, now gave himself up to worthless dissipation, throwing the support of the children entirely upon her; her life becoming one incessant round of toil to procure comforts for those dependent upon her.

We remained in Baltimore a year, during which time I became the subject of the most cruel treatment from my step-father. This was a fresh source of suffering to my mother; but her interference only made it worse for me, and she was obliged to remain passive for her child's sake.

We removed from here to Jersey city. Mr., for a short time, reformed—he went to work, was quite steady, and for a while we lived very comfortably. My mother began to regain her habits of cheerfulness, and to look forward to better days. “But all too short our transient bliss;” her husband fell into his old habits of dissipation again, and treated us all worse than ever. A gleam of sunshine shone across our pathway at this time in the form of our acquaintance with Dr. Barrow, an Episcopal minister of that place,

who proved to us an invaluable friend, and of whose church my mother became a member. He insisted upon my attending Sabbath school, which I was very glad to do. I also attended weekly school, and soon learned to read, as, from my earliest recollection, I have been very fond of books and study.

My step-father was now taken ill: he was confined to his bed for a number of weeks, and suffered intensely. Dr. Barrow visited him often, and through his prayers and intercession he experienced a change of heart, much to the gratification of those who had suffered by his evil conduct; and while we had but little cause to mourn the death of one, who had, during his connection with us, marred our peace, yet it was consoling to know that he had passed from death unto life eternal, for we know

“That even to the best, the wise, and pure, and pious,
Death, repulsive king, thine iron rule is terrible.”

Through the imprudence of her husband, my mother's means were now entirely exhausted, and by the fatigue and anxiety at-

tendant upon his sickness and death, tired nature gave way, and a slow fever set in, which reduced her to the verge of the grave. We were in the midst of distress and suffering, but God in this, our time of need, sent an Angel of Mercy to our aid, in the person of a widow lady, an intimate friend of Dr. Barrow, who not only nursed the patient with the most assiduous care, but supplied our wants abundantly out of her own means. Upon my mother's recovery, she advised her removal to New York, offering her a room in her own house, which offer was most heartily accepted.

A happy and serene year we passed in this, our new and quiet home; basking once more in the cheering rays of the sunshine of friendship, when death, cruel death, came again with his scythe, and mowed down the tree whose branches had sheltered us from the world's rude blast. For weary months we saw her linger, poised between earth and heaven. But oh!—how sweet the task to watch around the dying couch of one to whom we owed so much, to smooth the rumpled pillow,

to bathe the fevered brow, and hold to the parched lips, the refreshing cup ; and this my mother most faithfully performed. Her midnight vigils she duly kept around the dying sufferer's bed, and when the last moment came, and the blow could be warded off no longer, with her own hands she performed the last sad offices which are due from the living to the dead.

About this time I was attacked with an inflammation of the eyes, a physician was immediately consulted, who pronounced it only a cold, which would easily yield to medical restoratives. The case, however, proved differently, the inflammation increased alarmingly ; another physician was consulted, who pronounced the disease ophthalmia, which was at that time very prevalent in New York. I was blistered, leeches and cupped ; in fact everything was resorted to with little or no effect, and the physicians proposed an operation. To this my mother strenuously objected, but being assured that her child would, without it, be hopelessly blind, she gave a reluctant consent. I was then placed upon a

chair and told that my eyes were to be cut. I screamed with affright, for they had already become so tender, from intense suffering, that I could not bear the slightest touch. My mother came to me and soothed me with those cheering accents which fall upon the ear from no other lips so tenderly as from a mother's, picturing to my simple, childish imagination, the consequences if I stirred. Upon that mother's lip such fondness hung, I did not dare to doubt; upon her words I had ever rested the most implicit faith. Placing her soft hand upon my head she breathed a silent but fervent prayer to the all-wise Being, to support her helpless child through this trying ordeal. That prayer went up to the Throne of Grace, borne on the wings of whispering angels, and I became passive. The operation was gone through with, and my eyes bandaged; when the bandage was removed not a ray of light could I discern with my right eye, the one operated upon. The inflammation of the other eye increased rapidly, and in a few days I was pronounced hopelessly blind.

I was too young to realize what I had lost, being only in my seventh year, but I shall never forget the anguish of my mother when the terrible truth burst with appalling weight upon her ear. She clasped me in agony to her breast exclaiming, "God help my poor blind child, and guide her through this land of darkness. To her view the glorious sunset, the silvery moon, and the twinkling stars, are forever obscured. The valleys are green with waving grass, the hills white with daisies, the trees laden with their foliage of many colored leaves, and rich blossoms, that waft a delicious perfume upon the air, but to the sightless eyes of my darling Anna, all the beauties of creation bloom in vain ; but into Thy hands, Oh God ! I commend her earnestly, believing that Thou wilt be her light in darkness, her sun, and her shield, and her help in every time of trouble."

And here I would quote from that beautiful poet B. B. Bowen, who, like myself, is blind.

" Ah, yes ! to me the world is dark !
No light, no sunshine, greets my sight ;
The fair green earth, the bright blue sky,
To me are ever veiled in night.

*I ne'er have seen the glorious sun,
Whose light alone hath power to cheer ;
Nor gazed at eve upon the moon,
Whose milder beams are yet more dear.


I ne'er have seen the beauteous flowers,
That bloom for brighter eyes than mine,
Nor gazed upon the stars of heaven ;
They, too, for me, will never shine.

There's nothing bright, there's nothing fair,
That unto me hath e'er been given ;
I dwell alone in this dark world,
Unblest by aught save hope of heaven."

* As there may be some of my readers who have never read the life and beautiful writings of B. B. Bowen, I would mention here that he was deprived of his sight at six weeks old, and when I compare my case with his, I am led to exclaim in the fullness of my soul, "That God is good, supremely good, for permitting me to gaze upon all the beauties of Nature, before he closed my eyes in total blindness."

CHAPTER IV.

"Sweet is the image of the brooding dove!—
Holy as Heaven a mother's tender love!
The love of many prayers and many tears,
Which changes not with dim declining years;—
The only love which on this teeming earth
Asks no return from passion's wayward birth;
The only love that, with a touch divine,
Displaces from the heart's most secret shrine
The idol, SELF."—*Mrs. Norton.*

Y mother! who shall attempt to define the endearing ties that exist between mother and child. The simple enjoyments of early life, and the pure sentiments from which they spring, are often transient, but their effect on the heart is never entirely effaced; and shrouded as I am in impenetrable darkness, I love to sit in the calm twilight and travel back, in memory, to those halcyon days that were blest with a mother's love; days checkered with lights and shadows, but oh! how short the season. Scarce had

the spring flowers bloomed ere they were nipped by the autumnal frost; scarce had I reconciled myself to my darkened pathway, and contented with the light that beamed from that loved mother's superior mind, when the fell destroyer came, and the last remaining prop on which I leaned sank under its burden. Her health, always delicate, gave way under the repeated shocks to which it had been exposed, and being no longer able to attend to household affairs, she was obliged to give up housekeeping and take us to a boarding house. In a few weeks she was prostrated and unable to leave her bed; her hold upon earth was loosening, and she was fast ripening for heaven; the only tie to hold her back was her poor blind child. "My child, my Anna," she would often exclaim, "what will become of you when I am gone!"

Perfectly unconscious of the trial that awaited me, I asked in my simplicity, "why, mother, where are you going—you will not leave your Anna?"

"My daughter," she faintly replied, "shall I tell you where?"

“Oh yes! yes,” I cried, nestling still closer to her in the childish fears she had awakened of losing her.

“I am going home to heaven, my child, to dwell with the bright angels, and all who have gone before.”

“How do you know?” I asked, still sobbing upon her bosom.

And then she explained to me the ravages of consumption, the disease which had fastened its hold upon her, telling me that if I were a good child, I should, when my pilgrimage on earth was ended, join her in that blest abode where I should meet my father and sisters, and where our parting would be no more.

From this time I never left her; I slept with her at night, and all day nestled by her side. One evening, when all nature was calm and still as an infant's slumber, in a voice so feeble as scarcely to be heard, she called me nearer to her, and told me she was dying, and before morning she would be in heaven; then bade me kneel beside her and say my prayers, and laying her hand upon my head,

she repeated the Lord's prayer with me, and upon rising from my knees, she said, "this is the last time I shall hear you say them, but remember, Anna, to kneel in prayer every night and ask God's protection, and commend yourself to His care and keeping." In a voice choked by sobs I promised that I would, and the last words I heard her utter were, "God protect my orphan child." She died before morning with my hand clasped in hers.

When they told me she was dead, I laid my cheek to hers and wept the bitter tears of an orphan's grief. Mrs. Nelson, a neighbor, who had been very kind to my mother and myself, gently raised me from the bed, carried me to the other side of the room, and tried to soothe my grief, and advised my going to bed. I refused to leave my mother. She then placed me in a large rocking chair, where I soon sobbed myself to sleep.

When I awoke, Mrs. Nelson was standing beside me. I asked for my mother; without answering me, she led me to the bed, where she lay cold and motionless in death. I clung to her, covering her precious face with kisses,

calling her by every endearing name, and begging her to speak to me once more; but no answer came to my piteous cries. Thus the awful truth burst upon my senses, that I should never hear her gentle voice again; never feel her warm kiss upon my lips, or be clasped again to her loving heart.

Mrs. Nelson then dressed me and took me to breakfast, promising that if I would eat some, I should go back and remain all day in the room where lay the mortal remains of my dear mother. I choaked down a few mouthful of breakfast and then returned to the room where my mother lay. This kind friend stayed with me all day, and at night put me to bed, with the promise of sleeping with me. I awoke in the night, and found her sleeping soundly, and the house very quiet, I stole softly out of bed and passed noiselessly along to the room, where I had passed the day, climbed upon the bed beside my mother, and laid my head upon her clay cold bosom, and fell asleep, and there I was found in the morning by Mrs. Nelson. In the afternoon my mother was buried near Jersey city. From the grave,

where her loved form was deposited, I was taken back to the room where she died, and solitary and alone I sat and grieved the hours away.

Some authors tell us, that childhood is always happy, always hoping, trusting and believing, that every pulse of its gushing blood throbs to the future, quick, joyous, and exhilarant ; that hatless, and shoeless, it rambles on ; stumbling, it laughs and springs forward ; censured, it halts not to bemoan ; wearied, it sleeps and is refreshed ; feeling no want, no care, no sorrow, so long as there is a tree to swing upon ; a string with which to fly its kite, or a single butter cup to flash the golden yellow upon the little maiden's cheek. Happy, trusting childhood, if it be that thou hast found it so, cling to it as long as thou canst ; aye—forever, to that pure trusting heart, long as thou keep'st it, thou shalt be joyous and happy. Would that I could paint this as my experience ; that no wild throbbings stir the pulses of my heart, as memory rushes back and falls on the crape hangings and funeral palls, under which reposed the forms of loved ones.

After my mother's death, it was determined that I should remain at Mrs. Larkins', where we had been boarding for sometime. She had a son who had been extremely kind to my mother and myself, and it was arranged that this young gentleman and my brother, who was now old enough to do something for himself, should pay my board. For awhile Mrs. Larkins was very kind to me, but afterwards became very cross, and treated me very cruelly. She took from me every thing that my mother had left, even a locket containing my father's likeness, which she sold. Her son was taken ill and confined to the house some three or four months, during which time, I was with him a great deal. When he was able he would read to me, or tell me some amusing story ; he taught me several little songs, which I was very fond of singing. He was not aware of his mother's unkindness, as she made it a point to treat me well in his presence.

Mrs. Nelson did not forget me. Hearing of an oculist of much renown who was in the city, she took me to him, hoping that he might be able to restore my sight. He frankly told

her, however, that this was impossible, but he could reduce the inflammation, and enable me to distinguish light from darkness. She purchased the medicine from him, and applied it herself, until my eyes were healed, but my sight was gone. For this and many other acts of kindness, I shall always remember her.

About this time a school for the instruction of the blind was opened in New York, (the origin of which will be found in the latter part of this work.) A gentleman who knew of my misfortune, hearing by accident of this Institution, kindly made application for my admission as a scholar, first asking me if I would like to go to school and learn to read. I told him I would, thanked him much for his kind attentions, and clapped my hands for joy, at the prospects opening before me, thinking of it all day, and dreaming of it at night. And thus, change after change was taking place in my circumstances ; sometimes fanned and matured by the hand of kindness and friendship ; at others exposed to coldness and neglect, and deprived of the social enjoyments which render the period of childhood joyous.

CHAPTER V.

“Then sorrow, touched by Thee, grows bright
With more than rapturous ray;
As darkness shows us worlds of light,
We never saw by day.”—*Moore.*

“There is a floating Island, forward on the stream of time,
Bouyant with fermenting air, and borne along the rapids.”
Tupper.



AND so to us, whose destiny it is never to behold the beauties of creation, are these schools for the blind. May blessings innumerable descend upon those who have, and are still putting forth their exertions for their success.

In April, 1833, I entered the “Institution for the Instruction of the Blind in New York,” as a scholar. It was held at that time in a private house in Mercer street, and numbered five pupils, all boys, who boarded in the same house with a widow lady by the name of Ellsworth. This lady received me very kindly when I entered the school. Taking me by the

hand, she asked me my name, then seating me in a rocking chair belonging to one of her little girls, she gave me a doll and some toys to play with, telling me the doctor would soon be in, (meaning the superintendent.) After a while my attention was attracted by a noise as of persons passing to and fro, I asked Mrs. Ellsworth what it was? She replied, "that it was the boys coming from the school room, which was situated in the upper part of the house." She then called them into the room and bade them welcome the new scholar.

The first that spoke to me was called John ; he was about fifteen years old, and had a very pleasant voice. He asked me to stand up and let him see how large I was, and placing his hands upon my head to ascertain my height, he exclaimed, " why—you are nothing but a baby ! "

I replied, " I am no baby, I am too large for that."

He then said, " I am to be your teacher, the doctor told me so."

" Who is the doctor ? " I asked ; " will he give me my sight ? "

“No,” he replied, “he cannot do that, but he is our superintendent and teacher; he is very kind, and you will soon learn to love him.

Supper was now ready, and I was seated beside Mrs. Ellsworth, who waited upon me very kindly; she soon won my affection by her attentions.

We had just finished supper, when the doctor came in; he took me upon his lap, and asked me many questions concerning my loss of sight and my mother. I was very shy at first, but his manner was so affectionate, that I soon became quite at ease in his company.

I could not understand how I could learn to read without seeing, and after pondering it over in my mind for some time, ventured to ask. He told me that I should learn to read with my fingers. Seeing that I was still more perplexed, he desired John to bring a card from the school room, which he did. The doctor then took my hand and ran my fingers over the card, telling me to feel the letters, adding, “when you have learned all the letters on this card, I will give you a book.” “Will it be a picture book?” I asked. This amused the

doctor and the boys very much, and I was often joked about it afterwards.

The doctor then gave one of the boys a lesson in arithmetic, during which I fell asleep, and was carried to bed by Mrs. Ellsworth.

The next morning I took my place in the school room, with John as my teacher, and before night I knew three of my letters.

The first of May we removed to a house in Spring street, which the managers rented for the use of the Institution. Mrs. Ellsworth left us, and removed to Philadelphia. A change much regretted by all, for she had endeared herself to us by her untiring attentions. I never met her but once again. Being in New York several years after her removal, she paid us a visit, and derived much satisfaction upon finding that she was still held in remembrance by the pupils. Her place was supplied by Mrs. L., as matron.

Among the first pupils who entered the Institution, was a boy of ten years of age, without father or mother, sister or brother ; he remained with us until he had acquired an excellent education, and had learned a trade. He then

went out from among us, without money and without sight, to battle with the world alone ; and in his case, that beautiful prophecy of sacred writ has been fulfilled : “I will bring the blind by a way they know not ; I will lead them in paths they have not known ; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight.” Fired with ambition, and asking strength from above, this youthful student has wandered on, his motto being, “still onward and upward ;” his efforts have been blest with success. He has since become a Methodist minister, and a superintendent of an Institution for the Blind.

We were to have a new pupil, the daughter of Mrs. L., our matron. I was delighted at the prospect of a little girl as a companion, as all the pupils were boys except myself, and numerous were the air castles I built, only to see them crushed to the ground. When she came she was most of the time with her mother, and I seldom met her except in the school room. She had a piano upon which she could play several tunes. I asked her one day if she would teach me to play. She replied in a very

cross tone, "No, the piano does not belong to the school, it is my own, and I shall use it myself." As I was very sensitive, this hurt my feelings so much that I cried bitterly. When the doctor came in, in the evening, he observed that I had been crying, and inquired the cause. I related what had taken place. He then drew me towards him caressingly, and said, "well, now I have a secret to tell you ; do you think you can keep it ? "

I replied, "oh yes ;" and he said, " well, it is this : we are to have a piano for the use of the school, and a music teacher, too, and four new scholars."

" Are they girls ?" I inquired, again catching at the hope of having a female companion.

The doctor replied, " three boys and one large girl ; she will be only a day scholar." I was now all anxiety for this addition to our number. Days passed and at length they came. Miss..... proved to be a very pleasant companion, although so much older than myself. She took every pains to amuse me, and make my studies interesting, and I was always sorry when the evening hour came, and she left us

until the following morning. She only remained six months ; and her absence caused a void in my enjoyments. I did not find it pleasant to spend so much of my time with the boys, or to join in their sports.

One day, while walking in the yard, I heard some one calling me. It was Margaret, our servant. She asked me to come into the kitchen, she had something to say to me. As I entered, she said, "I am going out this afternoon, little Miss Anna, and am going to buy you something ; what would you like to have?" I hesitated, and then replied, "I have but five cents, what will that buy?" "I do not want your money," said Margaret ; "tell me what you would most like to have, and I will buy it for you." I then said, "of all things I would like to have a doll." Accordingly that evening I was in possession of a beautiful doll, the first one I had owned since I had been an orphan.

Do we ever pause to consider what a trifle is required to make childhood happy? A doll or a simple toy ; a word kindly spoken will cause the little heart to expand exultingly,

the eyes to sparkle with the lustre of the sun-beam, and the cheek to glow with a monarch's pride over its valued possessions.

I thanked Margaret many times for the little gift, and telling her I would call it Maggie, I ran off to the school room to show it to John. He said "it is very pretty, but you must not let it interfere with your studies." I replied, "Oh! no, Johnie, I will always put it away until after school." As I was leaving the room, I was met by Mrs. L., who asked what I had, and where I had gotten it? Full of childish glee, I related to her the short history of dollie Maggie, little supposing what a reprimand was in store for me. Directly the lady commenced a sharp reproof, saying "that I was a naughty girl to ask Margaret for it." My smiles were immediately turned to tears. "I told her that I did not ask Margaret for it, but that she had kindly given it to me." All my protestations were of no avail. Mrs. L. would not believe me, and persisted in charging me with falsehood. Margaret hearing the altercation, and the frequent mention of her name, came for-

ward and explained the matter, and I was permitted to keep the doll. But this little affair had served to cool the ardor of my attachment towards Maggie. Whenever I took her to play with, the trouble I had gotten into on her account, and having my word doubted, always came across my enjoyments.

The same day, at the close of the morning school, Cornelia (Mrs. L's daughter) asked me to come into the parlor, saying she "would teach me to play a tune upon the piano." I refused, telling her "that her mother would be displeased, and would scold me." Cornelia, however, insisted, and I followed her into the parlor, where, after having played two or three tunes for me, she seated me at the piano and commenced teaching me the notes. I was in a perfect ecstasy of joy, and had nearly learned their names, when I heard the front door open. A quick step through the hall, and Mrs. L. entered the parlor. With a flurried manner, and in an angry tone, she flew to me and seizing me by the arm, asked "what I was doing there?" Intimidated by her manner, I replied, "that Cornelia had ta-

ken me in there to teach me to play." "I do not believe a word of it," she said, "you knew that I was out, and took advantage of my absence to be disobedient." I was so frightened that I could not utter another word in my defence; and taking me by the shoulders, she pushed me out of the parlor, and forbade me ever to enter it again without her permission, adding, "that she would not allow me to have any dinner."


I proceeded to my own room in the attic, where I gave way to a violent burst of tears; at first I was very angry with Cornelia for not clearing me of the charge, and telling her mother the facts in the case, and still hoped that her own conscience would compel her to do so when I was not present. I began to think of my mother, and called on her again and again, to come and take care of her little girl; but no answer came from that spirit land where dwelt my sainted mother, and a thought came over me that the spirit of my dear mother was pained at my having given way to angry feelings towards Cornelia, and I offered up a childish

prayer for forgiveness, and fancied that I could see my darling mother's frown change into a smile, and I became subdued.

Presently Margaret came up with some bread and water, which Mrs. L. had sent for my dinner; I drank the water, being very thirsty, but could not eat the bread. I told Margaret that I was very sorry for having disobeyed Mrs. L., and would tell her so, but that she would not let me. Margaret consoled me the best she could, and dressed me for the afternoon's school, then led me down to the school-room. When the tea bell rang that evening, I ate the piece of bread which had been sent me for dinner, and then went to Dr. Russ' (our superintendent) office, who had been absent all day; I had missed him very much, for in his affectionate caress I ever found a solace for all my real or imaginary troubles.

CHAPTER VI.

"Let winter come! let polar spirits sweep
The darkening world, and tempest troubled deep!
Though boundless snows the wither'd heath deform,
And the dim sun scarce wanders through the storm,
Yet shall the smile of social love repay,
With mental light, the melancholy day!
And when its short and sullen noon is o'er,
The ice-chain'd waters slumbering on the shore,
How bright the fagots in his little hall
Blaze on the hearth, and warm the pictured wall."
Campbell.

HOPE! blest inspirer of the human breast, what were our world without thee, without thy consoling influences, in every situation of danger and distress? To the mother watching over her sleeping infant, in the lonely midnight hour, to the seaman on his watch, and to the soldier marching into battle; thine is the charm of life's bewildered way; a heavenly gift to man. Weary passed the hours to my seemingly desolated heart. The clock struck eight before

the doctor returned, and when I heard his well known footstep, I ran to him as was my custom, to bury my grief in his caresses. As soon as he had seated himself, I climbed upon his knee, and as well as I could for sobs and tears, told him all that had happened, confessing my willingness to offer an apology to Mrs. L. for my misconduct, if she would hear me. He hushed me tenderly; said he was sorry I had been a naughty girl, and that I must always obey Mrs. L. in his absence. The clouds were driven from my heart by his sweet smile, which, although I could not see, I knew by the tender tones of his voice, was hovering over me. I was again made joyous and happy, and promised to perform all he had exacted of me.

Margaret came up to summon him to tea. He went to the dining room, taking me with him. Margaret asked him "if he would give me some supper, as I had eaten nothing since morning, excepting a piece of dry bread." He seemed much surprised that I had not told him this, and asked "why I had not eaten my dinner?" I told him "that

Mrs. L. had not given me anything but bread and water, and that I did not want it." He then asked me "why I did not go to supper?" I said, "I was afraid of Mrs. L." He then had me seated beside him, and gave me my supper, which I really enjoyed, being very hungry.

After the meal was concluded, and we had returned to his office, he took me upon his lap again, and told me that the managers talked of buying a large house, with a beautiful flower garden attached, in which were also a number of choice fruit trees; that he was going the next day to look at it, and if he approved of it, they would purchase it, and we would remove there in the fall.—"and how will our little Anna like that?" he added. "Oh, that will be so nice!" I exclaimed; highly pleased at the prospect of a change, as the house we were in was very small, and we felt very much crowded. Accordingly the doctor went the next day to visit the house, and returned with the news that it was purchased, and we should remove there as soon as it could be made ready for our reception.

About this time the Institution received three new pupils, two of whom were brothers, one nineteen, the other twenty-one years of age. They were both very intelligent and played beautifully upon the flute. The other was a young man from Orange county, New York. He had a beautiful voice for singing, and played upon the piano by ear. I soon made his acquaintance. He was very kind and social in his manner, and I, being the only little girl in the school, soon won his favor. He offered to give me lessons upon the piano. I thanked him earnestly for his kind offer, as I had as great a thirst for music as the weary traveller has for the cooling draught. "But," I said, "we shall have to wait until we get a piano for the school. We are not allowed to use the one in the parlor, that belongs to Mrs. L's daughter, Cornelia, and she will not let any of us touch it."

A few days after this, the doctor told me he would send home something in the course of the day that would please me very much. He would not say what it was, as he wanted to surprise me; and in the afternoon the long

wished for piano arrived. As soon as it was put up, I ran in search of the young man and asked him to come and give me a lesson, for we had a piano of our own. He was as much pleased as myself. We spent the remainder of the afternoon in puzzling over the notes, and by night I knew their names and situations. When Dr. Russ came in, I ran to him and told him how much I had learned, and asked, "when shall we have a music teacher?" "Not until fall," he answered, "when we have removed to our new house; and there will be also many other new arrangements made." Mr. Clark, the young man before mentioned, seeing how much I was disappointed, renewed the offer of his services, and under his tuition I made some advancement. I look back upon that as one of the happiest hours of my life, when I first learned to touch those keys, and pour out upon them the thoughts and inspirations of my deepest feelings.

Oh, music! well hast thou been called divinest of all the arts, the deepest of all mysteries. In thee is embalmed the memory of the

past, and from thee comes the hope of the future. When oppressed with wrongs, insults, and the cares of life, thy charms have power to dispel the gloom, and lighten every burden. There is nothing like the concord of thy sweet sounds upon the social feelings, to move the heart to deeds of nobleness and lofty daring.

“Till David touch’d the sacred lyre,
In silence lay the unbreathing wire—
But when he swept its cords along,
Even Angels stoop’d to hear that song.
So sleeps the soul, till Thou, O Lord,
Shall deign to touch its lifeless chord—
Till, waked by thee, its breath shall rise
In music, worthy of the skies!”

A few days after this, on going to my room early in the morning, I found Margaret sitting there sewing. I inquired of her what she was making. She replied, “I am making a dress.” I said, “Margaret, I think I could sew, if I had a needle and some calico.” Ever ready to indulge me to the utmost of her power, she answered, “well I will give you the materials, and you can try.” She then cut out a dress for my doll, gave it to me, and I commenced

making the skirt. The next day I went to the kitchen to get Margaret to thread my needle, I had taken but two or three stitches when it came unthreaded. I did not like to trouble her again, so I thought I would try and thread it myself. After working with it for about fifteen minutes I succeeded. I flew to the kitchen to show it to Margaret, who was as much pleased as I was. I then tied the thread in the needle to put it away and show it to Dr. Russ when he came in, in the evening. He too was much pleased that I had succeeded in the effort, and said, "If I would learn to thread it for myself, he would give me a dollar," and by trying every day, at last learned to thread it quite readily.


As it may seem strange and incredible to some of my readers that a blind person can thread a needle, I will explain how it is done. I place the needle upon my tongue, so as to feel the eye. I then prepare the thread and put it close to the needle. I can tell when it is through the eye by feeling it against my tongue. In this manner I can thread the finest needle

In the fall, agreeably to our expectations, we removed to our new house. It was very large, airy and convenient, quite an agreeable change from the close confined rooms we had left. The recreations too which the garden afforded, we found very beneficial. A music teacher was engaged, under whose instruction we were all placed. Priding ourselves much upon our abilities in the different branches of instruction afforded us, we did our utmost to give satisfaction to our teachers. A number of pupils were added to the Institution after our removal, among whom were several girls. This proved very agreeable to me; for the first time since my admission, I had the satisfaction my heart had so much yearned for, that of female companionship. I had sighed for it, and now truly appreciated it.

CHAPTER VII.

“Without our hopes, without our fears,
Without the home that plighted love endears,
Without the smile from partial beauty won,
Oh! what were man? A world without a sun.”

Campbell.

NE day the doctor brought a lady to see us, who remained several hours, reading for, and amusing us with interesting stories. We gathered around her, delighted with her company. When she arose to go, we all joined our petitions for her not to leave us; she said “she was obliged to go then, but that she was coming to reside with us, and that we should have plenty of her company.” Full of childish curiosity, and being allowed the privilege of questioning the doctor with the familiarity of a caressed child, I asked him the name of the lady. He replied, “I will now introduce her; this is my wife, Mrs. Russ, and I hope and believe that the more you see of her the more you

will love her." We were all astonished and pleased, for we had no intimation of this change. To this kind lady, Mrs. Russ, we are indebted for many advantages; she was highly educated and accomplished, and devoted her time and talents to the interests of the Institution. She took particular pains with our reading—taught us to commit passages of poetry to memory and to recite them readily, and when the doctor was absent on business for the Institution, which he was often obliged to be, she would take his place in the school-room.

The following summer, the doctor, accompanied by Mrs. Russ and five of the pupils, visited several towns in the interior of the State, for the purpose of collecting pupils, and also to spread abroad the increasing reputation of the Institution. During this trip we visited Saratoga, where we received much kind attention from the ladies. They took particular pains to amuse us; sang and played upon the piano for us, took us riding with them, and in fact did everything they thought could in any degree contribute to our amusement. We

returned much benefited by the jaunt, and brought with us five new pupils. Some three months before this jaunt, our Matron, Mrs. L., left us. Her place was supplied by a Quakeress, to whom we soon became very much attached. To her, as well as to those whose dreary life she had come to cheer and to brighten, the sun had been obscured by sorrow and a lowering cloud had settled over her head. She had a son who was a deaf mute. He came every Sunday to see her and to spend the day at the Institution. In the afternoon he would take some of us out walking; when he wished us to step up, he would raise our hands, as he could not speak to us. When there was anything in the road that he wished us to notice, he would place our hands upon it. He would sometimes gather flowers for us, and that we might know what they were, he would put them to our nose. He would often place his hands upon our eyes and groan. This was the way he had of telling us how sorry he was that we could not see.

Our Matron spent most of her evenings in knitting. I would often set by her side, lis-

tening to the click of her needles, and holding her ball. I asked her once if she did not think that I could be taught to knit. She seemed to think it very doubtful, but I thought I could, and was determined to make the trial the first opportunity. One day when she had stepped out and left her knitting work on her table, I took it up, seated myself in her rocking chair, put her spectacles upon my nose and tried to knit. She came in and found me thus occupied, which amused her very much, although she said she was tempted to scold me for meddling with things that did not belong to me. I was not at all intimidated, for she had never been cross or spoken harshly to any of us. The next day she undertook to teach me to knit, and I was five months knitting one pair of stockings, but I have since learned many kinds of fancy knitting, which have proved quite profitable.

Several exhibitions were given by the pupils, which gave entire satisfaction, and were the means of making for us many warm friends.

A number of ladies, whose interest had

been awakened in favor of the Institution, determined to give a fair for its benefit. The first one succeeded so well that two or three more were given, and from these fairs twelve thousand dollars were realized.

A part of each day the boys were employed in basket making, rug, and mat weaving. The teacher of the former was a graduate of the Glasgow Institution for the instruction of the blind.

One day at the close of school, Dr. Russ desired us to remain a few moments, as he had something important to say. He then remarked, "that he was about to leave us, expressing much regret that circumstances obliged him to do so." When he ceased speaking, not a sound was heard, but we all clustered around him; I, taking my accustomed place upon his knee, begging him not to go. We had not realized how much we loved him until then. He had been with us three years, laboring night and day for our advancement, and for the welfare of the Institution, and now a shadow had fallen over our prospects. We must give him up, our faithful friend and

kind instructor. To him we are indebted for many inventions which have aided us materially in our education.

After he left us we often visited him at his own house, and were always kindly received by him and his family. To him I owe a debt of gratitude which I can never repay.

Dr. Wallace took his place, and the following summer another tour was made through the State, for the same purpose as the former. Among the pupils who accompanied us was a lad, aged eleven years, who possessed a remarkable talent for arithmetic; he could perform, mentally, almost any sum that was given him. At one of the exhibitions a gentleman among the audience said to him: "I have a father who is aged seventy-five years, nine months, ten hours and fifty minutes; can you tell me how many seconds he has lived?" While calculating this sum mentally, he sang a part of a song, Dr. Wallace reading to him at the same time. He gave the answer, and then repeated what the doctor had been reading. The gentleman who had given the sum, said the answer was in-

correct; the boy went over it the second and third time, still giving the same answer. The gentleman still insisting it was incorrect, asked the privilege of coming on the stage, saying, "he would go over it with the boy." This was granted, and taking a seat beside him, said, "he hoped he would excuse him for the trouble he was giving, but he wished to prove that his calculation was right." The boy maintained his self-possession, but replied very politely: "If you will allow me, sir, I will show you where you have made the mistake; you have not added the minutes." The gentleman immediately arose, and acknowledged to the audience that the mistake was his, and the boy was correct. This brought such a burst of applause, that it was some time before we could proceed with the exhibition.

The next winter Dr. Wallace resigned his situation, and we were without a superintendent until the following August, when Mr. Jones was elected to fill the vacancy. This gentleman devoted his whole time to the interests of the Institution, introducing several new studies, also band-box making.

The apartments for the boys and girls were now entirely separate, so that I never met John, my old friend and teacher, except in the school-room, where I always received a smile and a kind word from him.

One morning when opening school, the teacher looking round, missed John, who was generally the first in his place; he enquired of the boys if any of them knew anything of John. As he was speaking the door opened and the missing one came in. As he crossed the room to take his place, the teacher observed that he walked lame. "What is the matter?" he asked. John replied, "that while wrestling with another boy, a few days before, he fell and struck his hip upon the ice; he did not speak of it at first, thinking it only a slight bruise, but it had now become very painful, and it was with the greatest difficulty he could mount the stairs." The physician's attention was immediately called to it, who pronounced it a serious injury, and ordered that he should be confined to his own room, and not allowed to irritate the limb by exercise. The pupils were allowed to visit

him daily, and their company was a source of great pleasure to him. Whenever he was able to bear it, his rocking chair was brought into the girl's sitting room; and they were never more happy than when contributing to his comfort and amusement.

On one occasion, when the doctor was examining his hip, he discovered that he had a very bad cough; this led to an examination of the lungs, which were found to be very much affected.

Under medical treatment his lameness improved, but his cough increased, and he was soon confined to his bed. When told by the physician that there was but little prospect of his recovery, he was much affected, but soon rallied his spirits, and said composedly—"Well, if such be the will of God, I will try and submit." The teacher, who was standing by, asked him, "if there was anything he particularly desired." He replied, "that he would like to have Dr. Russ and his mother come to see him." They were immediately sent for. When the doctor came I took him by the hand, and we went up to John's

room together, and entered very quietly. Approaching the bed, the doctor, without speaking, laid his hand upon the patient; as soon as he felt the touch he started up and exclaimed, "Why, it is Dr. Russ. Oh! how kind it is of you to come and see me so soon. Can you do anything for me, doctor?" "I fear not, my poor fellow," he replied, "but every possible thing shall be done for your comfort and satisfaction." He then asked the doctor if he would promise him one thing, which was, that he would be with him in his last moments? This the doctor most earnestly promised, for to his kind and noble heart an appeal from a sufferer was never made in vain.

From John's room he went down into the school-room to see his old pupils, who were always delighted to receive a visit from him. Our teacher gave us permission to leave our seats, and directly we were all gathered around him, besieging him with questions mostly relating to John. Upon taking leave he told us he would be with us often while John was so ill; but this proved a very, very

short period ; the poor boy failed rapidly, and in the course of a few weeks we stood around the death-bed of our friend and fellow-pupil. His last moments were quiet and peaceful. His days on earth had been darkened. He had traveled through life's pilgrimage uncheered, save by the light reflecting from a brilliant mind ; but looking away to that bright world where the sun is never obscured, where the lamp of day shines brightly, and forever, the darkness was removed, his vision was clear, and surrounded by rejoicing angels, he saw his Saviour standing ready to receive him. His last words were, " Lord into thy hands I commend my spirit."

This was the first death that had occurred among the pupils, and it spread a gloom over our little assembly. Teachers and scholars had loved John, and each one mourned his early death, and followed him to his last resting place with sorrowful hearts and tearful eyes.

My time was much occupied ; beside my school duties, I received lessons upon the pi-


ano, and in vocal music, and I also instructed three scholars upon the piano.

I spent the first hour after breakfast in taking care of my house plants, of which I had quite a number, all gifts from dear friends, some of whom were slumbering with the dead. This was one of my most pleasant enjoyments. I spent many happy hours among them, watering their roots, trimming their stalks, or clipping their drooping leaves, and dwelling with mingled feelings of pleasure and pain upon the memory of the givers. I am extremely fond of flowers. Although I cannot distinguish their beautiful hues, I can enjoy their fragrance.

“Then cheerish as the kindest ties,
The spirit’s varied sympathies;
No doubt that He, these gifts who lent,
Hath each on mercy’s errand sent.
And links of love in earlier hours,
Lie buried in old-fashioned flowers.
The midnight heaven, the starry sea,
Hath whispers from thy God to thee,
And He, who man from Eden hurled,
Spared flowers to grace a guilty world.”

CHAPTER VIII.

“When a cloud of gloom hangs o’er the soul,
That the lips refuse to tell,
A whisper is borne on the stilly air,—
Trust God,—and all is well.”—*Mrs. E. P. H.*

NE day when busily engaged in the school-room, Mr. Jones, the superintendent, sent a messenger to me desiring my presence in the parlor, as he wished to speak to me upon some particular business. I directly answered the summons, and after seating me, he asked “if I knew how long I had been in the Institution, and how long I had to remain.” I replied, “that I had but one more year to remain.” He then said, “well, I sent for you to say, that I have just received a letter from the Secretary of State, granting you an additional year. Would you like to remain with us another year?” I replied, “that I should; that I considered it a great favor, for which I was much indebted; and

would, during that time, endeavor to make myself competent to teach music." There our conversation ended, and I was on the point of leaving the room, when two gentlemen entered, with one of whom I was well acquainted. They inquired of Mr. Jones, "if there was a pupil in the Institution who was competent to take a situation as leader of a choir; and also if there was a young man whom he could recommend as an organist." Mr. Jones replied, "that he could not say, but would refer the matter to the music teacher, who was fortunately in the house at that time, and if the gentlemen would excuse him, he would speak to him on the subject at once. He left the room, and in a few minutes returned with the music teacher. To my surprise and gratification I was informed that I had been selected as leader of the choir. The next Sunday I was to go to the church, and if I suited, was to retain the situation. The following Tuesday, I received the appointment.

This, added to my other duties, occupied my time very closely. I was obliged to practice diligently, and for this purpose often arose

at five o'clock. The members of the choir were very kind and attentive, coming to the Institution to practice, to save me the trouble of going to the church, which was in a distant part of the city. I retained this situation three years, after which I accepted a similar one proffered me by the congregation of Dr. Seabury, and while in this situation I united myself with the Episcopal Church, and have remained connected with it since that time.

It had always been my intention to use the first sum of money which I should earn, for the purpose of removing the remains of my loved mother, to some sweet quiet spot, where I could sally forth at early morn or dewy eve, and in silence unbroken, save by the sound of my own footsteps, twine the choicest flowers above her precious dust, and water them with my tears.

Need I say then how my bosom glowed with exultation, when by my own exertions I had realized a sufficient sum, and having purchased a lot in a beautiful cemetery near by, and completed my arrangements, I with some

friends who were kind enough to lend me their assistance, repaired to the spot where my mother had been laid. But who shall picture my grief and disappointment when I found that the grave yard had been so demolished and desecrated, that it was impossible to point out the grave. In a moment this little treasure, which I had hugged to my heart as the miser does his heaps of gold, valued, far above its worth, for the purpose to which it was to be applied, became valueless, and as dross. Never again was I to weep over those loved ashes. Parted forever until the resurrection morn !

I went home bowed down with grief and disappointment, but kind friends gathered around me, to cheer and comfort ; and time the sweet soother of the mourner's cares, has borne me gently on, guiding me through paths I have not known.

The gentleman of whom I had purchased the lot, hearing of my disappointment, came to me, and with the most respectful condolence offered to purchase it, which offer was gladly accepted, as I had no other relative to lay

there. I am, as far as I know, alone in the world. I had a brother, of whom I have spoken before, but circumstances over which I had no control, transpired to separate us, our paths lay in different directions; years have intervened since I heard from him. An ominous presentiment steals over me, telling me that he too slumbers with the dead, and that I am indeed alone. Alone! How dreary the word sounds! My drooping spirit sinks into the ashes of the buried past, recurring to hours when I was sheltered by loved ones. At such times I have prayed, and I know 'twas not in vain, for in these moments I have fancied that I could almost feel the breath of hovering angels fan my brow.

Much to the regret of the pupils, Mr. Jones left us. As a mark of respect and affection, we presented him with a gold-headed cane. He was much affected upon receiving it, and promised never to part with it.


My time in the Institution expired about this time, and I was appointed assistant teacher of music, with the privilege of continuing my musical education under my old teacher. Mu-

sic is a favorite study with the blind, and one in which many of them excel. It is not learned by ear, as most persons suppose. The notes are read to them by their teachers, and they commit them to memory.

The principle studies taught at the Institution, were Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Geography, Grammar, History, Rhetoric, Physiology, Moral and Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Geometry, Trigonometry, and Algebra, all of which, excepting reading and writing, are taught by the teachers reading each lesson over several times to the pupils.

CHAPTER IX.

“Onward its course the present keeps,
Onward the constant current sweeps,
Till life is done ;
And, did we judge of time aright,
The past and future in their flight
Would be as one.”—*Longfellow.*

UR next superintendent was Mr. P. D. Vroome, who remained with us about two years, and was succeeded by Mr. Wm. Boggs, who, for over four years had been our kind and excellent teacher. We were very happy at his election, and welcomed him with joyful hearts and bright anticipations of the future, for what had he not already been to us. Our hearts had twined around him with ties of social affection. We had learned to listen with anxious expectation for his well-known footstep, and the tones of his voice which ever met us kindly. If we had

been idle or neglectful of our duties, we met no harsh reproof, but a gentle admonition, which found its way to our feelings, and encouraged us to double our diligence, in order to become the pride of our worthy friend and teacher. Long will the pupils remember the instructions and counsels of this our faithful friend, "whom every heart congratulates—but none more cordially than mine."

For two years he cheered us with his smiles, often awaking our drowsy energies with some incentive, to speed us on toward the summit to which ambition leads.

Thus years glide on and bring their changes. The diversions of childhood are laid aside, and youthful amusements and pastimes take their place. The following spring had been a season of unusual enjoyment to me, but while out riding one afternoon with the physician of the Institution, he being engaged in describing the beauties of the surrounding scenery, the horse took fright while going down a hill, and ran off at a rapid rate. I was thrown out, striking my head against a fence as I fell. The physician, who was with

me, immediately jumped out of the carriage, came to me and lifted me up. Other gentlemen who were upon the road, seeing the accident, came forward and offered their assistance. I was perfectly unconscious, and it was thought I was dead, but as soon as the blood began to flow from the gash in my head, I revived. They placed me in a carriage which belonged to one of the gentlemen present, and conveyed me to the nearest dwelling, which was a private Lunatic Asylum, the physicians and matron of which, were personal friends of mine. Here I was laid upon a table, and buckets of cold water poured upon my head to wash the gravel from the gash. There were several physicians present, but none of them had a case of instruments with them, and they were obliged to use a common needle to sew up the cut in my head, which was eleven inches in length.

After this painful operation I was laid upon a sofa, and the doctor, who had been the companion of my ride, returned to the Institution to report what had happened to the superintendent. He was very much concerned, and

immediately returned with the doctor to the Asylum to see me. I was in a very precarious situation, and by the doctor's particular request, I was taken to his mother's house, as I was obliged to be kept quiet, and it was very noisy at the Institution. I remained ill for several weeks, and was nursed with great kindness and care by the doctor's mother and sister. As soon as I was able to see visitors, many of the managers and teachers of the Institution came to see me, and as soon as it was deemed advisable, I was removed to the Institution, where I met a kind welcome from all the inmates, but was not able to resume my duties until the following fall.

Some time after this, a German Oculist came to the city. Many of our pupils went to see him, and one received his sight. This induced me to visit him. After examining my eyes he told me he could restore my sight. I consulted with the managers and teachers of the Institution, and by their advice, agreed to submit to an operation, which was extremely painful. I did not move a muscle while it was being performed, but as


soon as it was ended, I fainted. Every remedy was used for my restoration, but one fainting fit succeeded another for about nine hours, the physicians remaining with me during this time. After these ceased I was kept in a darkened room two weeks, having at different times leeches applied to keep down the inflammation.

After this the bandage was removed and the light admitted, when to my great disappointment I could see but little better than I did before. The physician assured me that as the eyes strengthened, the sight would increase, but I had no confidence in his assurances, and resigned all hope of ever seeing again. This grieved me very much at first, but I tried to bear up under it with patience, looking to Him who has seen fit to afflict me, for that comfort and support which flows from no other source.

CHAPTER X.

“Never again shall evening, sweet and still,
Gleam upon river, mountain, rock, or hill,—
Never again shall fresh and budding spring,
Or brighter summer hue of beauty bring.
In this the clime where 'tis my lot to dwell,
But shall recall, as by a magic spell,
Thy scenes, dear land of poetry and song;
Bid thy fair statutes on my memory throng.”

Mrs. Norton

HE next summer I received an invitation from one of our old pupils, who was married and settled in Batavia, to spend the vacation at his house. Hitherto all my vacations had been spent at the Institution or in traveling for the benefit of the same. Thinking that the change would recruit my health, which had been somewhat impaired since the operation upon my eyes, I accepted the invitation, and in July set out alone. This was quite an undertaking for me,

being the first time I had ever attempted to travel alone, but I met many friends through whose kindness and attention I was enabled to reach my journey's end in safety, where I received such a kind welcome that I soon felt at home.

In a few days many of the villagers called upon me and invited me to visit them, which I did, and derived much pleasure from their social intercourse.

The following week Mr. C., his wife and myself, went to G. to visit their friends residing there. Here we were urged to give a concert, and after much persuasion yielded. This paid so well that we gave several others.

After our return to Batavia, Mr. C. asked me "how I would like to assist him in teaching music." "I told him I could not think of leaving the Institution." We talked the matter over several times, and I at last consented, upon his promising to pay me the same salary that I had been receiving at the Institution. On the first of September I returned to New York and announced my intention to the superintendent and managers. They ex-

pressed so much surprise and regret that I was sorry I had made arrangements to leave. This had been my home for over fifteen years, and I found it very hard to part with my old schoolmates and teachers. The managers told me if I ever needed a home I should find one there. Mr. Chamberlain, the superintendent, was very kind indeed, and I shall never in all my life's journeyings, forget his kind farewell.

After passing through the school-rooms and work-shops to take leave of the pupils, I went to the music-room, and here the saddest task of all awaited me, to say farewell to my music teacher. For thirteen years I had been his pupil, and in all that time he had never spoken to me one harsh or unkind word. I found it very hard to part from one with whom I had been so long associated, and under such very pleasant circumstances. His good bye and "God bless you—may you be as happy as you deserve to be," seems to fall pleasantly upon my ears when ever I think of that parting, and a silent prayer goes up to the Giver of all good gifts for his welfare and success in every undertaking.

The solemnity of leave-taking over I started for Albany on board the *Sir Isaac Newton*. Shortly after the boat had left the wharf, the Captain brought the stewardess to me, and told her to see that I was well taken care of and made comfortable. In the evening he sent me my supper, and my breakfast in the morning, with a message to wait when the boat landed until he was at leisure, and he would see me safely on the cars. Accordingly, when we arrived at the wharf, he procured a carriage and conveyed me safely to the cars, where he left me in charge of a gentleman who was travelling west, and who promised to take care of me to my journey's end, and give me in charge of my friends.

We travelled on very pleasantly until within five miles of Auburn, when some of the machinery became disordered and the engineer thought it advisable to stop for a few minutes. After having seen that everything was properly adjusted, we started again at a very slow rate. A few moments after, several gentlemen who had been standing on the rear platform, came running through the car, saying

“there was a train coming on behind us at a rapid rate.” They had scarcely uttered the words before the engine ran into us with a tremendous crash, knocking the steam pipe off. The car in which I was seated became immediately filled with steam. Some of the passengers tried to escape through the windows, and others by the door. As soon as I felt a current of air, I made my way in the direction from which it came, and escaped through the door, passing on through several cars. The order was then given for all the passengers to get off, as there was danger of the boiler bursting. This frightened me so much that I called for assistance; a gentlemen stepped forward, lifted me off and laid me upon the grass, where I fainted. A number of the lady passengers came to my assistance; restoratives were applied and I soon revived, but to my horror I found that my hands were dreadfully scalded, also my face and throat, the latter from inhaling the steam.


A gentlemen came forward and asked me “if I were the lady who was in company with Mr. M.,” I told him I was. He then said

“He was sorry to inform me that Mr. M. was badly scalded, and had also cut his hand in the attempt to escape through the window, and being unable to render me any further assistance, had requested him to take charge of me ;” at the same time offering his services to render me any aid that was in his power, an offer which I gratefully accepted, for I was alone and helpless.

My hands were dressed with raw cotton, taken from the cushions of the cars, dipped in lamp oil. We were then placed in cars procured for the purpose, and sent on to Auburn.

CHAPTER XI.

"There's nothing dark below, above,
But in its gloom I trace Thy love,
And meekly wait that moment when
Thy touch shall turn all bright again!"—*Moore.*

N this suffering condition we arrived at Auburn, where several managers of the road came on the cars and desired me to remain there until my hands were better, but I preferred going on, as I did not like the idea of staying among strangers. My hands were here dressed again by a physician, and I proceeded on my journey. Just before I reached Batavia, a gentleman came to me and presented me with sixty dollars, a present from the passengers. He also gave me his name and address, telling me if I were ever in need, to write to him and he would assist me.

When I arrived at Batavia, my friends were

much surprised and shocked to learn what had happened. A physician was called in who dressed my hands and pronounced it a very severe burn. I was not able to use them for over two months, not even to feed myself.

In such a time as this, we only know how to appreciate the power of sympathy, and the consoling balm of friendship. Had it not been for these cheering rays, dark and dreary indeed would have been my pathway, but in all my afflictions the hand of an all-sustaining Providence had been extended over me.

Three weeks after the accident I received fifty dollars from the Railroad Company; this, with the present which I had received on the cars, was of great assistance to me.

When my hands were healed they were not the least scarred, which I think was owing to the constant attention and good nursing which I received; but to my regret I found I could not read. This was a terrible privation, for I was very fond of reading, and passed many hours in this way that would otherwise have dragged wearily on. But thanks to a merciful Providence for the last two years I have

been able to read, but not with as much facility as formerly. The scalding of my throat has materially injured my voice ; it has never regained the strength and clearness which it once possessed.

About a year after this affliction I received eight hundred dollars from the Railroad Company, as a compensation for my sufferings and loss of time. For this I owe them my due acknowledgements. I have found it a great help.

We continued teaching music here about two years, having a large class.

We received a visit about this time from one of our old classmates, a young man of excellent education and fine musical talents; and being out of employment he proposed to Mr. C. to form a company for the purpose of giving concerts. The plan was readily entered into, and Mr. C. went to New York to obtain from the Institution an alto singer, and returned bringing with him a young lady fully competent to take her part in the performance. The company was then formed under the name of the "Blind Vocalists," and consisted

of Mr. C., his friend Mr. G., Miss B., and myself as musicians. A lady travelled with us to attend to our writing, &c. A driver, who also acted as door-keeper, and an agent, making seven in all. Our instruments were a piano and guitar, the former we carried with us for about six months; but finding it very heavy and troublesome to move from place to place, we sold it and purchased a melodeon.

We travelled in our own carriage, liking it much better than a public conveyance. We had been travelling in this way sometime, meeting with success wherever we went, and receiving the highest applause, when a shadow was again thrown over my cheering prospects. We were travelling in Madison county. In stopping at the house of Mr. C's brother, I was taken ill, and here the company were obliged to leave me, as I was unable to proceed with them, and here I remained the rest of the summer. I was nursed and attended by Mrs. C., although a stranger, with the most tender and untiring care. Day and night, like a ministering angel she kept her vigils around my couch, never flagging in her

exertions, but like a fond devoted sister, soothing and cheering me with kind words. Before leaving in the fall to join the company again, they told me I should look upon their house as my home, and since then I have always called it home, and have passed many happy hours beneath their roof. I shall never be able to discharge the debt of gratitude I owe them.

We next went to Utica, and having an idle day, we sent a note to the superintendent of the Lunatic Asylum, offering, if agreeable, to give a concert before the inmates in the afternoon. We received in reply, that they would esteem it a great favor to have us come, and that the necessary arrangements would be made by two o'clock. Upon arriving there we found two hundred and fifty patients assembled in the Chapel, who greeted our entrance with a loud burst of applause. They appeared to enjoy the music very much. Miss B., read for them the twenty-third psalm, which was selected by one of their number, and many of them wept like children. Before singing the last piece, one of the inmates

arose and thanked us for our music, saying, "it was a great treat, and they should always remember our visit with pleasure."

I was then called upon to thread a needle, which astonished them very much. After the concert was over, many of the lady patients brought me needles to thread, saying, "they would keep them as long as they lived."

We were then waited upon by the superintendent through the building, which was very commodious, and contained between five and six hundred inmates, many of them raving maniacs. We returned to the hotel thinking upon the sad condition of these poor creatures, many of whom were hopelessly insane, and feeling thankful that God in his wonderful providence had taken our sight instead of our reason.

The following is taken from the "*Opal*," edited and published by the patients of the New York State Lunatic Asylum.

TO THE BLIND VOCALISTS.

"Though the flowers of earth may be from you riven,
Oh, be not desponding, the gardens of Heaven
Have flowers so fair, 'twould ravish the sight—
There your eyes will be opened in regions of light.

“And here where the billows so fearfully roll,
And clouds of thick darkness envelope the soul,
All hushed was the tempest, to list to your song,
For the sweetest of numbers to you still belong.


“With fingers well skilled, and senses refined,
The pages of God are conveyed to your mind,
And fancy illumines and has richly supplied
What God in his wisdom to you has denied.

“Then light be your hearts, as the soft summer air,
For the angels of Glory for you sweetly care ;
They watch you by day and at night in your dreams,
They'll come 'round your pillow, and fold their bright
wings.”

These verses were composed as a tribute of esteem and respect for having been mindful of them, and presented to us before we left Utica.

CHAPTER XII.

"What fairy chains hath nature cast
To link the spirit to the past,—
A bird's song on a summer's day
Speeds lightening thoughts far years away.
That spot, where we the lake beside,
Threw pebbles in its glassy tide,
And marked the wid'ning circles break
Like many a dream of fancy's make."—*Mrs. Hul32.*

E remained in Utica a few days after our visit to the Asylum, and gave two concerts, which were well attended. Leaving there we visited a portion of the eastern States, but not doing as well as we anticipated, we concluded to go west. Accordingly we started for Ohio, and arrived there in due time—not meeting with any occurrences on our journey worthy of mention. We remained there several months, and gave a number of concerts. From there we wended our way to Kentucky, and afterwards to Indiana, remaining some time in each State.

After travelling for nearly three years, my health became delicate and I concluded to withdraw from the company. Another severing of ties was to take place, and our paths were to lie far, far apart, and only to Him, to whom every transaction is known, could we look for another meeting this side the grave.

I returned to New York city and spent the summer in visiting among my friends. In the fall I received an invitation from my friends in Madison county, to spend the winter with them. This I accepted, and was soon comfortably established in their house-hold. Rest and quiet restored my health, and the winter passed pleasantly and happily away. Winter is generally a season of gaiety ; the long evenings afford time and opportunity for many amusements, pastimes and social enjoyments. To a social company gathered around the fire-side of a country dwelling, where the laugh, the song, and the jest go freely around, the hours fly swiftly by. Thus I ever found it in the home of my kind friends, amid their smiles and friendly caresses, on airy wings the moments flew. My health

was now re-established. I had no longer a plea for remaining idle, and being unwilling to remain a dependent upon the hospitality of such kind friends, I remonstrated against their urgent entreaties to stay with them, and determined to return to New York and seek a situation as music-teacher. After giving my word to return to them if my efforts should prove unsuccessful, they reluctantly yielded to my plans.

For some time after my arrival in New York, nothing offered, and I began to feel very much discouraged, when the thought occurred to me, to apply for a situation at the Institution where I had been educated, and where I had afterwards been employed as teacher.

Before applying, however, I made known my intention to a friend who had been one of my first teachers, and afterwards superintendent of the Institution, and for whom my heart had always throbbed with warmest friendship. I was then visiting at his house. When he heard me through, he asked me "if I preferred a situation at the Institution to any other ;" I replied "that I did not, my

object was to earn for myself a comfortable living, and my thoughts had naturally carried me back to the sunny days of childhood and youth, passed among that social circle, hoping and expecting in every time of need to find friends there." "Well," he added, "I was thinking, if you had no objection, we should be glad to have you remain with us and teach our children; we are in need of such a person, and prefer you, at a fair salary, to any one else." This offer was like a genial shower to drooping flowers. I had been associated with them for years, and knew that in the bosom of such a family I should be at home. His wife was a lady in the true sense of the word; educated, refined, and one of the most gentle of her sex. I gladly accepted the offer, and remained with them two years, loving them all more and more, as day succeeded day.

From there I went again to spend some time with my friends in Madison county. While there it was my misfortune to have another attack of illness. It seems to have been my destiny in sickness, to fall into the hands of these kind friends; but Mrs. C,

never more happy than when aiding the suffering and unfortunate, attended me with all her former care and kindness. Her neighbors, to whom it appeared as if she had imparted some of the excellent traits of her character, came forward and begged to be permitted to share, as they said, in ministering to one upon whom their Divine Master had seen fit to lay the chastening rod. As in former cases, I was wavering between life and death, waiting with calm resignation the will of my Heavenly Father, whose infinite mercy it was to restore me again to partial health.

Mrs. C. would not hear of my leaving them, and by fancy knitting, which brought in now and then small funds, I was prevented from being an entire tax upon their generosity.


Thus I made myself satisfied for two years. There was another strong tie which bound me to this family; a lovely little cherub ten months old. I am naturally very fond of children, and my affections centred in that sunny-faced, bright-eyed boy. The patter of those little feet was music to my ear, and

the baby laugh of our darling Freddie, rang sweetly on the morning breeze, when I carried him in my arms, as was my custom, to ramble through the garden walks in order to inhale the invigorating air.

The petted idol of such a mother, none could wonder that he won every heart. When he was two years of age, he would often come to me and tell me to get my bonnet, and take him walking—and taking my hand would lead me with the carefulness of an older person to the next neighbor's, which was but a short distance. On reaching the gate he would place my hand upon it and tell me “to open.” Strange as it may seem, I felt perfectly safe when guided by this infant hand. The hand of our Heavenly Parent is always over infant innocence—and led on by Freddie, listening to his prattle and answering his questions, I seemed as it were, to live my infancy over again. When fruit and flowers were brought in, Freddie always selected the largest and best of the fruit and the brightest flower for me.

CHAPTER XIII.

"The friends whom I have loved so dearly,
The hearts that beat with mine sincerely,
Whom I regard by every tie
Which truth and honor sanctify ;—
They know me well, and well can feel
The friendship kept, with saintly zeal,
Through every change of time and care,—
Pride of my principle and prayer."—*Cameron.*

HUS in the enjoyments of this domestic circle, two more years of my life had passed away ; the bracing country air had done much towards building up my health. The fancy work that I had been doing did not pay very well. The cost of medicines and doctor's attendance had made quite an inroad into my small funds, and I felt as if it were my duty to launch upon the world once more, and put forth my efforts to take care of myself.

Mrs. C. expostulated, pointing out the rocks and quicksands over which I should have to grope my way. I could not yield to her entreaties, and in opposition to her wishes I wrote to the post-master at Baltimore, asking if there was an Institution for the Instruction of the Blind in that city. If so, would he be kind enough to give me what information he could upon the subject. In a short time I received an answer to my letter, accompanied by a report of the Institution and a copy of the by-laws.

I next addressed a letter to Mr. B. F. Newcomer, then Corresponding Secretary of that Institution, asking for a situation as music-teacher. In due time this gentleman replied, offering me a situation at a small salary, and requesting me if I accepted to come as soon as possible, as they needed the services of an assistant music-teacher.

I accepted the situation, although the salary was small, being willing to assist those who were afflicted like myself.

My next perplexity was how I should inform my friends that I had decided to accept

the situation, and once more go out from under their protecting care, but as in other cases, I nerved myself for the task. Many regrets were expressed at my determination, but as I had notified Mr. Newcomer at what time to expect me, it was too late to withdraw from my engagement. I therefore completed my arrangements for departure as hurriedly as possible.

With feelings of deep emotion, which none know but those who are bereft of kindred ties, I pressed those hands in parting, bedewed the face of their cherub child with my tears, and with faltering voice sobbed out a sad farewell.

I was not permitted to start alone, some friends accompanied me part of the way, and placed me on the cars en route for New York, where I arrived safely and found other friends awaiting me. After spending a short time with them, I started for Baltimore, where I arrived without accident. I was met at the depot by the superintendent of the Institution, and conducted to my new home.

I felt very lonesome for some time after my arrival, being entirely among strangers, with

no well-known friendly voice to greet me or to encourage my efforts to please, but sad and alone I passed many weary hours, with

“A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles rain.”

I taught in this Institution three years and a half. During the last year I had an attack of paralysis, occasioned by over-exertion and severe cold. For more than four months I was not able to discharge my school duties. I was attended by Dr. C. Johnston, physician of the Institution, to whom I owe my heart-felt acknowledgements for his kindness and attention.

Towards Mr. Newcomer there will ever remain a warm place in my heart. To his feelings the suffering never appeal in vain. Words would be inadequate to show forth his kind acts and noble deeds—but in the hearts of many his memory will live when he has gone to reap his reward in those bright realms, where the righteous only dwell.

Some months before my illness I received a letter from my friends in Madison county, informing me of the death of my little pet Freddie. Little did I think when I bade him good-bye and imprinted the warm kiss upon those rosy lips, that I should never meet him again; but so God willed it. The death-angel came suddenly and unexpectedly and bore him away before they had time to let me know of his illness—and while I was contemplating long years of enjoyment with him as my juvenile companion, and even far beyond this period, the mist penetrated into the future, when Freddie, with the buoyant and steady step of youthful manhood, would support my tottering form with the same affectionate solicitude, with which in his joyous infancy he had led me by the hand. But he has gone before me. A voice proclaims that though he cannot come to me I may go to him.

“He is not dead,—the child of our affection,—
But gone unto that school
Where he no longer needs our 'poor protection,
And Christ himself doth rule.”

I never entirely recovered after being afflicted

with paralysis, therefore thought it best to resign my situation, which I accordingly did, and went to spend another summer in Madison county, and returned in the fall, to make my home with one with whom I had been pleasantly associated in the Institution. This young lady, one of the teachers, soon won my affections. Often have I been indebted to her for her endeavors to lighten my toils, when I have been weary and disheartened from debility and fatigue.

To you who are blessed with sight, the privilege is given to form your friendships in a measure from the delineations of the face. The speaking countenance, the expression of the eye, the cheering smile and the scowling frown are generally supposed to show forth the character,—but all these are hidden from our view. We hear of the fair faces, expressive orbs, and sylph-like figures of our friends, but to us they are only a figure of speech. With the blind, nothing makes a deeper impression on the heart than the low, sweet tones of the human voice. This my young friend possesses in an uncommon degree. Her

winning, unobtrusive manner, with the many little attentions, trifling in themselves, but of the greatest weight to me, a lonely stranger, gained my warmest confidence and deepest friendship.

“’Tis not the kindred tie of blood,
Though much in that there be;
’Tis the warmth of heart and the flow of soul
That binds the friend to me.”

Thus we glided on through our duties at the Institution, each day rendering me a greater debtor to M., for her invaluable services in assisting me through my tasks, which my feeble health rendered difficult.

When I was obliged, on account of my health to resign my situation, M. was called home about the same time, from circumstances connected with family arrangements. She is a native of Baltimore, and has a large circle of kindred and social relations in the city. She knew I was alone, she had heard my tale of orphanage and destitution in earlier years, without a friend to lend me a helping hand, save those who have been drawn towards me

by the feelings of their own kind hearts, and that again I must go forth to battle with cold unfeeling natures in order to earn a livelihood, her fond faithful heart was opened to receive me. She invited me to share with her the comforts of her mother's home, an offer gladly accepted.

Here, in the bosom of this kind family, I have for the last two years found a home. Her mother and only sister have been all that such friends could be to me. Here too, our hearth is enlivened by the smiles of a lisping, curly-headed boy, the only child of Mrs. C., M's sister, and in the affectionate endearments of little Jimmie, I sometimes lose sight of the void which death has made in removing Freddie from earth, to his home beyond the skies.

May the favors which they have bestowed upon a lonely stranger, who is destined to travel through this world in darkness, be returned to them a thousand fold, and when their pilgrimage on earth shall cease, may they "inherit a crown of righteousness which fadeth not away."


And now, gentle reader, I have given an imperfect detail of the lights and shadows through which I have passed. A few more fleeting years, and I hope to meet you in that quiet haven, where the mariner reposes from his toils, where the winds of heaven fold up their wings and rest. The voyage of life will be ended, and death the quiet haven of us all.

“The book is completed,
And closed like the day
And the hand that has written it,
Lays it away.
Darker and darker
The shadows may fall;
But sleep and oblivion
Must reign over all.”

THE ORPHAN BLIND GIRL,
WRITTEN BY FRANCES J. CROSBY;

AND

DEDICATED TO ANNA C. SMITH.

ER home was near an ancient wood,
Where many an oak gigantic stood;
And fragrant flowers of every hue
In that sequestered valley grew.
A church there reared its little spire;
And in their neat and plain attire,
The humble peasants would repair,
On Sabbath morn to worship there;
And on the laughing breeze would float
The merry warbler's choral note;
When at Aurora's rosy dawn
Was decked with light the dewy lawn.
A pearly stream meandered there,
And on its verdant banks so fair,
From school released at close of day
A group of happy girls would play.

With their gay laugh the woodlands rang ;
Or if some rustic air they sang,
Those rural notes of music sweet,
Echo, would in her tones repeat.
Amid those scenes of mirth and glee
Where was the sightless girl? Was she
Blithely as others sporting there,
Or wreathing garlands for her hair?
She sat beside her cottage door,
Her brow a pensive sadness wore ;
And while she listened to the song
That issued from that youthful throng,
The warm tears gushing down her cheeks
Spoke what no other language speaks?
While their young hearts were light and gay,
Her hours passed heavily away ;
A mental night was o'er her thrown,
She seemed dejected and alone ;—
Yet no ! a mother's accents dear
Oft fell upon that blind girl's ear.
While all were locked in dreary sleep,
The mother o'er her couch would weep,
And as she knelt in silence there,
Would breathe to God her fervent prayer,
That He, all merciful and mild,
Would bless her solitary child.
'Twas eve,—

The moon unveiled her light,
And many a mild and radiant star
Its lustre spread o'er climes afar.

That mother to her throbbing breast,
Her lovely daughter fondly pressed;
She on her bosom leaned her head,
And thus in mournful accents said—
“Tell me, dear mother, what is sight?
I hear you say the stars are bright
In yonder sky of azure hue,
Oh! that I could behold them too!
You tell me of the summer flowers
That blossom in the greenwood bowers;
Their balmy breath is sweet to me,
But I shall ne'er their beauty see!”
Here Anna paused, her mother sighed,
Then in a low sweet voice replied:
“On earth those joys may ne'er be thine,
But why, my child, why thus repine?
'Tis thy Almighty Father's will,
Command thy murmuring heart be still;
There is a fairer world than this,
A world of nerver-fading bliss;
There let thy heart, thy treasure be,
And thou its purer joys shalt see.”

The summer and the autumn past,
And wildly blows the wintry blast;—
'Twas midnight,—nature slept profound,
Unbroken stillness reigned around,
Save in one little cottage, where
Was heard a dying mother's prayer,
“O God! my helpless orphan see,
She hath no other friend but thee;
She friendless on the world is thrown,
Sightless, heart-broken and alone.
Father, all merciful and mild,
Protect my solitary child!”
One last farewell that mother breathed,
One parting sigh her bosom heaved,
And all was o'er, she had fled
To mingle with the uncounted dead.
The dreary winter passed away—
The spring returned and all was gay;
O'er hill, o'er vale, o'er verdant plain,
The warbling choir was heard again;—
But not the spring's most cheerful voice
Could make that orphan's heart rejoice
Her mother's grave was near her cot,
And Anna to that lonely spot,
Though blind, would solitary stray,
To kiss the turf that pressed her clay.
'Twas evening's melancholy hour,

Cool zephyrs fanned each nodding flower ;
O'er her soft lute her fingers ran,
And thus her mournful lay began :—
“ Alas ! how bitter is my lot,
Without a friend, without a home
Alone, unpitied and forgot,
A sightless orphan must I roam.
Where is that gentle mother now,
Who once so fondly on me smiled ?
Whose kiss I felt upon my brow,
As in her arms she clasped her child.
I could not see that angel eye
Suffused with many a bitter tear ;
But oh ! her deep heart-rending sigh
Stole mournfully upon my listening ear.
I knelt beside her dying bed,
I felt her last expiring breath ;
‘ God guide my child,’ she faintly said,
Then closed her lovely eyes in death.

“ Oh ! how I long to soar away
To that blest place where she doth dwell ;
To join with her the choral lay,
Angelic choirs forever swell.”
She ceased, she heard a footstep near,
A voice broke gently on the ear :
“ Maiden ! I've heard thy tale of woe,

More of thy history I would know ;
Oh, tell me why thy youthful brow
Is mantled o'er with sadness now !”
“ Sir,” she replied, “ well may I weep,
Beneath this little mound doth sleep
All that to me on earth was dear ;
My mother's lifeless form lies here,
And I, her only child, am left
Of kindred and of home bereft.
But He who marks the sparrow's fall,
Will hear the helpless orphan's call ;
My mother bade me trust His care,
He will not leave me to despair.”
The stranger sighed. “ Dear child,” said he,
“ Thou hast my warmest sympathy ;
No longer friendless thou shalt roam,
I'll take thee to a happier home ;
A home erected for the blind,
Where friends affectionate and kind,
Will o'er thee watch with tender care,
And wipe away the orphan's tear.”

“ Forgive me, sir,” the maiden said,
As modestly she hung her head,
“ I cannot bear to leave this grave,
Where friendly flowers they tell me wave ;

And oh ! while here I sit alone,
And listen to the winds low moan,
Methinks my sainted mother dear,
Smiles on me from the starry sphere ;
And softly then she seems to say :
‘ My child, my darling come away
To the bright mansion where I dwell,
And bid that world of care farewell. ’ ’
The stranger wept, his generous heart
In other’s sorrow shared a part.
“ Thou must not linger here,” said he,
“ Haste, I entreat thee, haste with me
Thou lone one, to that dear retreat,
Where thou a sister band shall meet ;
Yes, maiden, they are blind like thee,
And they will love thee tenderly. ”

How changed that sightless orphan now,
No longer clouded is her brow ;
Her buoyant step is light and free,
And none more happy is than she.
For education’s glorious light
Hath chased away the mental night ;
Contentment smiles upon her face,
And with delight her fingers trace,
The page by inspiration given,
To guide her to a brighter heaven.

If through the past her memory stray,
Then music's sweet and charming lay
Drives each dark vision from her breast,
And lulls each heaving sigh to rest ;
Her grateful lips breathe many a prayer,
For him who kindly placed her there.

THE PRAYER OF THE BLIND.

BY MRS. C. M. SAWYER.

Written for the "Blind Vocalists."

WHY are we sightless? On the hills once more
We know the wealth of gorgeous summer lies;
The blue streams glide along a flowery shore,
And bright-plumed birds are winging thro'
the skies.

But we are dark! O, not for us the fields
Are gay with flowers of every glorious dye;
In vain the sun, the golden radiance yields
That only falls upon a darkened eye!


Why are we sightless? All our yearning breasts
Are full of visions vague and undefined;
Upon our souls a solemn burthen rests
Of dreams, that still no utterance can find,—
We pant; we struggle with unspoken care;
We pine to pierce the unknown realms of sight,
Till all our being in one mighty prayer,
Goes crying up to God for light—for light!

Why are we dark? O, the earth no answer hath!
Immortal love! speak thou, and light our way!
Open thy fountains that our souls may bathe
Till all their depths are flooded with the day!
God of the blind!—'tis done!—we walk no more
In sullen darkness, for we walk with Thee,
Faith leads us gently t'ward the better shore,
Where none shall say "I'm blind!" *for all shall see.*

THE BLIND.

WRITTEN BY MRS. C. M. SAWYER,

FOR THE SAME.

HE IS BLIND! How few of us feel, in its full force, the melancholy meaning conveyed by this so simple and every-day observation. We gaze into the expressionless orbs of the blind man as he sits before us, and the thought comes over us, how sad it must be to be bereft of sight.

Here, with many of us, all sympathy ends. We look well and long at the outside, but do we go deep down into the heart and read what is burning there? Do we remember that that heart has a thousand restless and irrepressible longings, of which we can know nothing, but which, so long as it feels and throbs, can never, never be appeased? The sun rises in the morning and shines forth upon the earth, revealing to *our* vision all the unspeakable

loveliness of the summer landscape, and dull must be the bosom that does not sometimes bound with rapture at the glorious sight. *He* too, knows the hour, and his whole soul reaches out to behold its beauties; he would give worlds but for one glimpse of what he hears and dreams is so fair; but he is blind, and not one ray can ever penetrate his darkened vision.

And so through a long pilgrimage of perhaps three-score and ten years, he walks in darkness, ever wrestling with unsatisfied desire and pining for what, in this world, may never be.

This is one side of the picture, and miserable indeed would the sightless be, were there not another. But thank the Great Father there is, and a brighter one. Though the external eye be dark, there is an inner, a mental, a spiritual eye through which floods of light may be poured to irradiate the whole inner being; and it is in proportion as light is furnished for this inner eye, that the happiness of the blind increases.

But with all that is now known in the com-

munity of the almost unlimited capacity of the blind for acquiring knowledge, it will scarcely be believed that not thirty-five years have elapsed since it first began to be even suspected, in this country, that they were capable of being educated at all. And even then, long was it after the dawning conjecture first found entrance into the heart of an aged member of the Society of Friends, ere any were found who for a moment believed in its feasibility.

It was regarded as a beautiful, but Utopian dream, that could never be realized. People shook their heads at the amiable weakness that could lead the good old Quaker into a belief in such quixotic schemes, and only one could be found to co-operate with him. But he did not despair, and how his attention was first drawn to the subject, and by what gradual steps he at length succeeded in maturing and carrying out his plans, the annexed extracts from the "tenth annual report of the managers of the New York Institution for the Blind," will show.

EXTRACTS

FROM THE

Annual Report of the N. Y. Institution

FOR THE

INSTRUCTION OF THE BLIND.



ABOUT the year 1830, the first movement in this country towards the education of the blind was made. The work was commenced nearly simultaneously in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and New York. In Europe, after the year 1774, when the success which attended the efforts of the benevolent Abbe Haüy attracted the attention of the philanthropic, various schools for this purpose had been instituted. To whom we are indebted for the first idea of the establishment

of a similar school in this country, it is impossible now to ascertain. The Institution in Massachusetts, it is believed, was the first one chartered, although the one in New York preceded it in commencing operations. It is probable therefore, and as will appear when we come to notice the efforts of the philanthropic in behalf of the blind, that the scheme originated in various minds about the same time. Mr. Samuel Wood, an aged and respectable member of the Society of Friends, who is now no more, and to whose efforts, until united with those of Dr. Samuel Akerly, the Institution mainly owes its origin, seems first to have conceived the idea of such an establishment in the years 1827, or '28. He was at that time, and for several years subsequently, a trustee and frequent visitor of the school for the orphan and other indigent children of the New York Almshouse. Several of the children, whom, in his visitations he frequently saw about the school, had recently been deprived of sight by an opthalmic disease, and thus kindled in his bosom a lively interest for that afflicted class, now the objects of our care.

As he witnessed their eagerness to acquire knowledge, their activity and apparent intelligence, the idea occurred to him, "cannot something be done for these unfortunate children?" In one of his visits to the school about this time, after noticing in the book usually kept for the purpose, (and which is fortunately preserved ;) the general condition of the school, he says:

"The pen with which this was written, was made by one of the six boys who lost his sight by the sore eye distemper lately prevalent here. *Query*.—Ought not some exertion be made to help these unfortunate children to be more comfortable and useful to themselves, and society in the long stage of darkness (all their lives) which must be their lot?

"11th mo. 4th, 1830."

Signed,

"SAMUEL WOOD."

An idea of the feasibility, as well as the necessity of some such plan, seems to have been gaining ground in Mr. Wood's mind for some time, and probably about this period he prepared for publication the paragraph alluded

to in the paper of Dr. Akerly, given below, which was found among his papers in his own hand-writing, after his decease, and by the politeness of his sons, Dr. Isaac Wood and Mr. John Wood, two of our Managers, has been placed at the disposal of the Board. It is here inserted entire, as a precious memento of the first movement made to draw the attention of the public to the subject.

“There are in our almshouse——little boys from——to——years of age, who are in total darkness by the loss of sight, occasioned by a remarkable visitation of sore eyes, which has long infected the children of that institution. In looking on the poor objects deprived of the inestimable blessing we enjoy, the sorrowful and affecting query arises, shall, or must they, to the latest day of perhaps a long life, be left to grope out time, without an attempt to meliorate their condition, and render them useful to themselves and their fellow-creatures, and in so doing, go far to make them happy by instructing them in a variety of branches for which they are fitted.

“Schools have been established in Europe,

and wonders performed by the blind ; and I think I have seen a hint lately in some paper of an attempt in Boston to stir up the sympathies of the citizens to so laudable a work.

“ Many good and charitable schemes have of late successfully engaged public attention. What one more useful can the mind suggest than one of this description ?—a school for the benefit of the unfortunate blind, whether so born, or by sickness, or any accident made so.

“ Let every American reflect. Were I to be deprived this day of my sight, and be thus enveloped in darkness, never more to see daylight, or any object, however dear, would he not think he had claims on his more favored fellow citizens, who with their children, are blessed with eyes and sight, to use their cheerful and joint co-operation, to establish a school or schools, sufficient to instruct all the deprived unfortunates ?”

The attention of Dr. Akerly seems, about the same time to have been directed to the subject ; whether from the publication of Mr. Wood’s paper, or from some other cause, is now uncertain, and in January, 1831, he in-

serted an advertisement in the papers in the usual form, stating that an application would be made to the Legislature, then in session, for an act of incorporation for an Institution for the Blind, to be located in the city of New York. But in whatever ways the minds of the two philanthropists were originally directed to the subject, we are not left in doubt as to the manner in which their co-operation in the common object was brought about. In a paper prepared by Dr. Akerly, and presented to the Board of Managers, during the last year that he presided over the interests of the Institution, and with a view to future reference on points connected with the early history of the Institution—he says

“It was the intention of the founders to open a broad field of benevolence, embracing the blind of all ages, and that those advanced in life, as well as the young, should have an opportunity of employment, *and, after having acquired a knowledge* of some mechanical branch of industry, be paid for the amount of their labor ; but the act of incorporation, when under consideration in the Senate of this State

(in the spring of 1831,) was amended by a Senator from this city, (Mr. Stephen Allen,) so that the action of the Institution was restricted to the instruction of blind children. This act was passed on the 21st of April, 1831, and constitutes the managers of a body corporate and politic, in fact and in name, by the name and style of the New York Institution for the Blind, for the purpose of instructing children who have been born blind, or who may have become blind by disease or accident.

“It is not my intention to speak of the present condition and bright prospects of this Seminary for the Blind, but to give some facts in relation to its origin and early history known only to a few.

“About the period that the first movement was made here in behalf of the blind, an aged and venerable member of the Society of Friends, on visiting the public school attached to the Almshouse, observed several children unable to take any part in the school exercises on account of blindness caused by ophthalmia, then prevalent in that establishment. He was led to prepare a paragraph for publication in

the newspapers, calling public attention to the forlorn condition of those children, and suggested that something should be done. He called on Mr. Hiram Ketchum, to procure his co-operation, and was by him directed to Dr Akerly, who had already taken the preliminary steps necessary to procure an act of incorporation. From that time he cordially co-operated with the first mover, and in the beginning was the only person who encouraged him to persevere in accomplishing the desired object. All others whom he consulted, laughed at the undertaking as a wild project, but with the solitary aid of the good old man, Samuel Wood, the pursuit was continued, until others became interested, and united their efforts in behalf of the blind. Ten years only elapsed, (written in 1842,) and an institution for the blind on an extensive scale is permanently established, and doubtless will continue to prosper.

“ When the petition to the Legislature was prepared and signed by a few gentlemen, it was presented to our venerable friend, who objected to add his name thereto, because it

terminated with the words usually concluding petitions to the Legislature—"for which, as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray." These words caused conscientious scruples, because said he, "it is not proper to pray to human creatures, but only to the Almighty." The objectionable words were accordingly stricken out, and others substituted, and the petition was signed and forwarded to Albany, and in due time acted upon.

"Previous to the passage of the act of incorporation, it was necessary to forward to Albany the names to fill up the blank for the first officers and managers. So little disposition existed among those applied to, to act in the premises, that, out of twenty, a few only consented to have their names introduced in the bill. As time progressed, and the necessity for decision became more pressing, the list of names in the Act was made out and sent to Albany, without consulting the individuals, and thus the act was passed.

"After this passage in April, 1831, little progress was made in relation to the objects of the act for the remainder of that year.

The President, (Dr. Akerly,) through Samuel Wood and Sons, wrote to England for information, and imported some books in raised letters, and apparatus for instructing the blind ; but no attempts were made to instruct them until the early part of 1832.

“ Previous to that time, Dr. John D. Russ, one of the philanthropists who had been an agent of the Greek Committee, to distribute the food and clothing sent to the suffering inhabitants of that devoted country from these United States, returned to America. Here, in this city, and not knowing what had been done in relation to the blind, he conceived the design of instructing them, and visited the Almshouse to examine the children in that condition there. Meeting with his old friend and associate, John R. Stuyvesant, who had also been an agent of the New York Greek Committee of 1828, he communicated his ideas respecting the blind, and was informed of the existence of an act of incorporation, and a board of managers, of which Mr. Stuyvesant was one. Dr. Russ was accordingly introduced to the President, and measures wer

concerted to open a school, he consented to give his services gratuitously as instructor.

“A room was hired in a house in Canal street, and three boys, taken from the Almshouse, were boarded with a widow residing in the same building. This was the humble beginning of the New York Institution for the Blind, now (1842) in so prosperous a condition.

“At that early period Samuel Wood was the only manager who assisted the President or took any interest in the undertaking. Although but a small affair, some money was needed for furniture, books, apparatus, board, clothing, &c. ; and the necessary funds for these purposes were principally collected by our worthy friend and manager from the commencement.

“In the spring of 1832, so much progress had been made by Dr. Russ in the instruction of the three boys from the Almshouse, that they began to excite an interest in others of the managers, and it was determined to enlarge the sphere of action, engage other premises, and increase the number of pupils. Accordingly, in May, 1832, a house in Mercer

street was taken, other blind children withdrawn from the Almshouse, and placed with those already under the instruction of Dr. Russ. These measures required increased expenditures, and here again Samuel Wood was indefatigable and persevering in collecting funds ; but others now began to take an active part, and henceforth the Institution was never without friends.

“ Before this relation is closed, it ought to be recorded, for the benefit of another of the original managers, who at first felt no interest in the undertaking, that he subsequently opened his eyes in the good cause, and exerted himself with great effect. This individual was Mr. Morris Ketchum. In 1833 he took a subscription book, and in a short time collected about a thousand dollars. While engaged in soliciting donations, he called on Mr. James Boorman, and observed to him that he was engaged in collecting contributions for a benevolent object, and wanted one hundred dollars from him. Mr. Boorman inquired into the object, and after hearing full and satisfactory information, he replied that

possibly he might do better by the Institution than by contributing one hundred dollars.

Mr. Boorman then related that he had a piece of ground, and a large unoccupied building, on the Ninth avenue and Thirty-fourth street, for which he would give a lease for a number of years, at a nominal rent, and the privilege of buying the same, if it would answer the purposes of the Institution. This is the ground on which the Institution is now permanently located.

Thus far the paper of Dr. Akerly. The first meeting of the managers of the New York Institution for the Blind, who were appointed by the Legislature, was held on the 14th Dec., 1831, at the house of Dr. Akerly, at which the following persons were present: Dr. Samuel Akerly, President, Henry Thomas, Samuel Wood, Morris Ketchum, Thompson Price, M. C. Paterson, J. R. Stuyvesant, and H. K. Bogart. A certified copy of the act of incorporation, passed April 21st, 1831, was presented, read and accepted, after which a statement of the means that had been used to bring about that result and copies of the cor-

responddence had with members of the Legislature, were read, together with the petition which the "venerable Friend," Samuel Wood, had refused to sign until the objectionable words with which it concluded had been altered. As another interesting memorial of the early days of the Institution, as well as to show clearly the object of its founders, this petition is here inserted.

"The petition of the subscribers, inhabitants of the City of New York, respectfully represents :

"That an Association has been formed in this city, for the purpose of establishing an Institution to improve the moral and intellectual condition of the blind, and to instruct them in such mechanical employments as are best adapted to persons in such condition.

"Schools have been established in various parts of Europe, to give instruction to children who have been born blind, or who have become so by disease or accident in early life. Various trades are connected with these establishments to employ the unfortunate blind when of a suitable age, and who would other-

wise be left in listless inactivity, mere ciphers or blanks in society. The first objects of this association will be to ascertain what can be done to meliorate their condition, how, and to what extent of instructing the young, and providing employment for those who shall be found proper objects of such an institution. It is a well known fact that the deprivation of sight quickens the sense of feeling, and in some instances has been known to exalt the intellectual faculties.

“It has been ascertained that in some parts of Europe, the blind are in the proportion of one to every thousand of the inhabitants, and by inquiries made in Massachusetts, a similar proportion has been found to exist in the states east of New York. If the same proportion should be found in this state, the number of blind might be estimated at nearly two thousand. A desire to recover them from degradation and ignorance, and to raise them to a rank of usefulness, actuates the members of this Association.

“Wherefore they solicit, that the Honorable the Legislature will grant an act of incor-

poration to the said association, by the name and style of THE NEW YORK INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND, for which, as in duty bound, your petitioners will *esteem it a particular favor*.

“New York, 28th March, 1831.”

Signed by SAMUEL WOOD, SYLVANIUS MILLER,
HENRY REMSEN, JAS. DILL, JR.,
E. HAND, GIDEON LEE,
R. RIKER, THOMPSON PRICE,
WM. T. SLOCUM, JOHN T. DOLAN,
GEO. ARMSTRONG, HIRAM KETCHUM,
Z. RING, SAMUEL AKERLY
WM. B. CROSBY, COREY TABER,
WALTER BOWNE.

After the reading of the petition, the act of incorporation, the correspondence with the Legislature, and the appointment of various committees, in furtherance of the common object, the meeting adjourned, “to be next called together when the president thinks proper.” On the 18th Feb., 1832, it was “thought proper” to hold another meeting and accordingly one was convened at 60 Wall street, at which Dr. Akerly, and Messrs. H.

Thomas, Morris Ketchum, J. W. Jenkins, H. Averill, C. Bolton, and H. Ketchum, were present. After filling several vacancies which had already occurred in their number, probably through distrust of the enterprise, a committee was appointed to prepare and forward a memorial to Congress for a grant of land to this Institution ; and another committee, consisting of Drs. Akerly and Russ, were appointed, "with power to make arrangements for instructing two or three children *by way of experiment.*" In pursuance of the first of these resolutions, an application was made to Congress, but no aid from that quarter was ever extended. A similar application from the Massachusetts Institution, it is presumed, met a similar fate, although a bill was reported appropriating a township of land for the purpose.

The next meeting took place at No. 1 Tryon Row, on the 19th of April, 1832, where Samuel Akerly, Curtis Bolton, Samuel Wood, Heman Averill, John D. Russ, and Morris Ketchum were present ; and at which Dr. Akerly reported, that three children had been

procured from the Almshouse on the 15th of March preceding, and were then under instruction. Dr. Russ also presented three baskets, which had been constructed by the blind boys, and which "afforded decisive evidence of the capabilities of the blind for receiving instruction." A committee was appointed "to procure suitable rooms and board for the ensuing year, and to make such other arrangements for the comfort and convenience of the children as they may deem expedient."

No other meeting took place till the 28th November, 1832. In the mean time the children had been removed from the house of the "widow in Canal street," to No. 47 Mercer street; the care of their education had been entrusted to Dr. John D. Russ, in whose family they resided, and in addition to the three boys placed under instruction, on the 15th of March, three other children were added on the 19th of May following. On Monday, December 10th, 1832, the managers again convened. The exertions of Dr. Russ in the education of his sightless pupils, had been crowned with such success, that a pub-

lic exhibition had been arranged, and which took place at the City Hotel, on the 13th Dec., at which "all the members of the Corporation, officers of public institutions, and others of our most influential citizens were invited." The interest awakened by this exhibition gave a fresh impetus to the cause. At a meeting which took place on the 28th December, it was announced that the exhibition at the City Hotel, had added to the subscriptions of the Institution two hundred and forty dollars. On the 31st of December the Board again assembled; elected the Managers for the ensuing year, re-organized with the newly elected members, when Dr. Samuel Akerly was re-elected President; Silas Brown, Vice President; J. D. Russ, Recording Secretary; Theodore Dwight, Jr., Corresponding Secretary; and Curtis Bolton, Treasurer; and thus closed their labors for the first year.

Hitherto the progress of the Institution had been a constant struggle against obstacles of every kind. Even the benevolent looked upon it as a well meant but Utopian scheme, and coldly and cautiously stood aloof. The school

labored under great embarrassments for the want of books and other apparatus, adapted to its peculiar wants, and no funds were provided to meet its expenses, except such as the voluntary subscriptions of a few of its immediate friends afforded. In one of the earlier reports we read that, "by persevering and indefatigable exertions of Samuel Wood and some others, five hundred and seventy-nine dollars were raised by subscriptions, and all expenses incurred to the 1st January, 1833, were liquidated and paid; by the exertions of the same 'indefatigable' friend, we find that in June, 1833, five hundred and nineteen dollars had been subscribed, four hundred and seventy-six of which had actually been paid in." It is worthy of note, too, as another instance of the inflexible regard to principle with which the good old man was guided, that upon the acceptance by the Board, in 1832, of an offer to give a ball for the benefit of the Institution, then struggling in the slough of pecuniary embarrassment, he solemnly recorded his protest against it.

A brighter day now dawned upon the Insti-

tution. The proficiency shown by the pupils at the exhibition at the City Hotel, had awakened the public attention and interest—friends began to multiply and means to flow in ; so that from this period, although it had many obstacles to encounter, still the progress of the Institution was steady and rapid. On the first of May, 1833, the school was removed to No. 62 Spring street, where it continued till the 1st November in the same year, when it was transferred to the premises at present occupied ; the Board agreeing to the offer of Mr. Boorman to lease them at a “nominal rent,” with the privilege of purchase within a given time.

The Board, in enumerating the various causes of success, and acknowledging the great and valuable services of individuals, would do violence to their own feelings, were they to omit referring with gratitude to the aid and support derived, about this period, from many benevolent ladies, who entered zealously into the cause of the Blind ; Mrs. John D. Russ, Mrs. Wm. H. Thompson, Mrs. Trulock, Mrs. Galatian, Mrs. Holmes, Miss

Van Wagenen, and others, whose names are lost in the imperfect records of that period, were untiring in their efforts to sustain, and build up the usefulness of the Institution. To them we are mainly indebted for the great success of several Fairs, producing some thousands of dollars ; nor were their efforts in obtaining individual donations less successful ; this assistance was the more grateful as happening at a gloomy point of our history, when the countenance and support of but a very limited number of our citizens had yet been extended to us.

In this year, also, an excursion was made by Dr. Russ, with some of his pupils, in which he visited several towns in the interior of the State, and by the performances exhibited to the public, tended greatly to awaken an interest in the growing Institution ; and in December, another exhibition took place at the City Hotel, which tended still further to promote this subject. The number of pupils had now increased to sixteen.

On the sixth day of May, 1834, the Legislature first extended its hand to foster the germ

it had planted two years before, by an act authorizing the Managers to receive from each Senate-district, four indigent blind persons, and to draw from the State treasury, for their support, at the same rate, (\$130 per annum,) as was paid for the support of the indigent deaf and dumb. At the end of the year the number of pupils had increased to thirty-six. Several branches of manufactures, such as basket and rug-making, had been introduced through the instrumentality of Mr. William Murray, of the School for the Blind, in Edinburgh, who had been induced to come to this country for that purpose, and the advancement of the pupils in their studies and trades, had realized the most sanguine expectations of their friends.

Early in the year 1835, Dr. John D. Russ, who had discharged the duties of Superintendent and Principal of the school, from its first establishment, with distinguished success, resigned his situation, and Dr. Wallace, now the eminent oculist of this city, was selected to fill his place. In December of the same year, Dr. Wallace tendered his resignation,

which was accepted, and he retired. At the close of 1835, the number of pupils had increased to forty-one, of whom twenty-eight were appointed under the law of 1834. In this year also an excursion through the interior of the State was made by Dr. Wallace, with a view of increasing still further the public interest in the Institution.

In the year 1836, the Legislature again extended its aiding hand by an act, passed April 30th, authorizing the appointment of eight indigent blind from each Senate-district, thus doubling the number previously provided for, and also by an appropriation of twelve thousand dollars, towards the purchase of the premises now occupied by the Institution, which clause was subsequently modified, so as to make it a condition for the payment of the above sum of twelve thousand dollars, that the Managers should first raise the sum of eight thousand, both of which sums were to be applied to the purchase, in fee simple, of the premises at present occupied, and the erection of a workshop adapted to the wants of the Institution. In August of this year

Mr. Silas Jones was appointed Superintendent, Mr. Richard Dennis having discharged the duties of that office during the interval between the resignation of Dr. Wallace and the appointment of Mr. Jones. Increased facilities for education had been contrived, or introduced from abroad ; books had been procured from Europe, and from the Institution in Massachusetts, where a printing press had been established, under the direction of the Principal, Dr. Howe. Maps with raised lines, writing cards, and ciphering frames, enabled the blind to acquire a knowledge of arithmetic, writing, and geography, to a degree of proficiency, unsurpassed, in many instances, by seeing children. New branches of manufacture had been introduced, and an additional instructor, Mr. Jas. Ingliss, was appointed to aid Mr. Murray in conducting the mechanical department. Music was now made a prominent feature in the system of education, and instruction in this department was entrusted to the care of Mr. Anthony Reiff, our present distinguished professor, under whose charge it has since continued. A band consisting of

eleven pupils had been formed, whose proficiency already excited much surprise and admiration. At the close of the year 1836 there were fifty pupils in the Institution, and but two deaths had yet occurred among its inmates; one by the cholera, in 1832, and the other by consumption, in 1836. The following table shows the increase in the number of its pupils since the year 1836:

| | | | |
|----------------------|------------|-----|--------|
| At the close of 1837 | there were | 64 | pupils |
| “ “ 1838 | “ | 63 | “ |
| “ “ 1839 | “ | 69 | “ |
| “ “ 1840 | “ | 72 | “ |
| “ “ 1841 | “ | 68 | “ |
| “ “ 1842 | “ | 76 | “ |
| “ “ 1843 | “ | 87 | “ |
| “ “ 1844 | “ | 111 | “ |
| “ “ 1845 | “ | 125 | “ |

In April, 1839, the Legislature passed an act authorizing the Managers to receive eight indigent blind pupils, from each Senate-district, in addition to those before provided for, thus making sixteen in all from the Senate-district; and this is the law at present in force.

In October, 1840, Mr. Silas Jones, who for four years had discharged the duties of Superintendent with much ability and success, resigned, and in November of the same year, Dr. Peter D. Vroom was appointed his successor. In the course of this year, band-box making, a new branch of manufacture, was introduced, and Mr. Charles Beumer appointed to take charge of it. It has since been continued, and affords, with willow basket-making, mat and carpet-weaving, employment to a large number of inmates. In April, 1843, Dr. Vroom retired from his place, and Mr. William Boggs, who had formerly discharged the duties of teacher in the Institution with great fidelity, was appointed to succeed him. Mr. Boggs held the office for two years, with the highest credit to himself and benefit to the Institution, when he resigned, and Mr. Chamberlain, the present incumbent, was appointed in April, 1845.

Such is very briefly a relation of a few of the more prominent points in the history of our Institution since its first establishment. It may be well to glance at a moment at its

present condition in contrast with its first feeble beginnings, as a doubtful "experiment," with three blind boys, in the house of a "widow in Canal street."

The grounds at present occupied by the Institution, extend from the 8th to the 9th avenues, and from 33d to 34th streets, being 800 feet in length by 200 in width. The main edifice consists of a centre building, 117 feet long by 60 feet wide, and two wings, each of 130 feet in length and 29 in breadth. The height of the whole is three stories, and the length of the front, including the wings, is 175 feet. It is constructed of Sing Sing marble, in the modern Gothic style of architecture. A spacious hall, 8 feet wide extends through the entire length of the main building in the first and second stories, and besides the apartments appropriated to domestic purposes, with sitting rooms, store rooms, music rooms, library, office, &c., the building contains a chapel 60 feet long by 40 wide; two dormitories, each 130 feet long, and 25 wide, one for female and the other for male pupils, and an additional dormitory for male

pupils, 60 feet long by 25 feet wide; two school rooms, each 23 feet by 40, with suitable recitation rooms adjoining; a willow ware shop, 92 feet by 24; a weaving shop, 22 by 12 feet, and a band-box shop, 32 feet by 24.

Suitable out-buildings are also constructed for stable and carriage room, depositories for materials and stock for the manufacturing department, &c. The grounds are now regulated, and separated into two divisions for the male and female pupils, planted with trees and shrubbery, and laid out into commodious walks adapted to the peculiar wants of those for whom they are intended.

The library contains 561 volumes of books in raised characters, and 134 volumes in the ordinary type. The books for the blind, although considerable in number, comprise but a small variety of works. There are among them 80 volumes, being ten sets (8 volumes to the set,) of the entire Scriptures; also 80 volumes, being twenty sets (4 volumes in a set,) of the New Testament; one copy of the Scriptures in 15 volumes; 23 volumes of a Geographical work, and 13 volumes of the

book of Psalms. Of Philosophical apparatus we have very little, except an air-pump and its usual accompaniments. During the past year, a terrestrial globe of 18 inches in diameter has been constructed, showing the most prominent features of the earth, with the parallels of latitude, longitude, &c., in relief; a map of the two hemispheres, upon a plane surface, showing many Geographical features more in detail, and a large map of the United States in raised lines, covering a surface of thirty square feet.

The whole number of pupils admitted into this institution since its first establishment, is 244.

With regard to the effects of blindness upon character, a subject of some interest in a psychological point of view, it may perhaps be generally said, that it is to render them *suspicious*. There is a principle sometimes observable in human nature, leading it to magnify to its own prejudice, any circumstance taking place around it, which is not well understood. To a stranger, in mixed company, a whisper, a half-heard expression,

or a word, is often unfavorably construed, especially if there be any peculiarity about him, which he might suppose would lead to remark. A blind person in the presence of seeing ones is placed in similar circumstances; unable to see what is taking place around him, his imagination is left to its full play, and his conjectures are prone to take an unfavorable cast. To this also, the greater sensitiveness which almost always accompanies any physical defect, greatly contributes. The mind is painfully alive to the least indication that the individual is the object of attention or remark, and with the keenness of perception with which blindness has endowed the other faculties, the sound of a footfall, the rustle of a garment, or the slightest change of tone in the voice is instantly detected, and often regarded with suspicion.

In those who have been *born* blind, as compared with seeing persons, little difference is observable in respect of character, until the faculties have become so far matured as to enable the individual to appreciate the disadvantages which blindness occasions. Children

born blind *seem* as happy as any others. Especially is this the case in our little community, where all are laboring under the same privation, so that no remark is more common with visitors than that "they all seem very happy," which is indeed true. Familiar with the premises, they go about the house and grounds with perfect ease and confidence; run, play and sport, with almost the same activity as seeing children; assemble in their school-rooms and workshops, resort to their dining-rooms, or retire to their dormitories, with the same facility as if they could see, so that those unaccustomed to their manners, sometimes almost forget that they are blind.

Still, as age advances, and the obstacles which blindness opposes to the progress of a laudable ambition, become more apparent, a gloomy cast of thought often takes possession of the mind, which it requires the utmost fortitude to suppress, and which is frequently too much for the strongest intellect to bear, without the aid and consolations of religion. The same remark applies to those who, having once enjoyed sight, especially if they were

not deprived of it until they had attained an age to appreciate its blessings, and the misfortune of blindness is perhaps more keenly felt by these last, than by those who, having never seen, are less sensible of the extent of their loss.

It is observed also, that there is less energy of character, both physical and mental, in those who have been born blind, than in those made so by accident or disease. The absence of such energy is, however, only another result of that general disorganization of the constitution, of which congenial blindness is but a single feature. In addition, it may be said, that instruction is more readily imparted, and ideas more correctly formed, where the individual possesses the advantage of having once seen.

We have thus concluded, as briefly as the circumstances would admit, an account of the origin, progress and present condition of this Institution. To its projectors and early supporters, it constitutes their noblest monument. To it, the citizens of the State of New York may point with conscious pride, and while we

congratulate ourselves on such satisfactory results, crowning an almost unexampled career of prosperity, we would devoutly thank Him who hath said, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it;" and to those engaged in similar enterprises, but who may yet be desponding in the calm of indifference, or struggling against the waves of opposition, we would point to our own feeble beginnings, and encourage them not to "despise the way of small things."

ANSON G. PHELPS, *Pres't.*

N. Y. INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND, }
December 31st, 1845.

LAURA BRIDGMAN.

THE following sketch of Laura Bridgman, who is deaf, dumb, and blind, is taken from the reports of the Perkins Institution, located in Boston, Mass., of which Dr. Howe is Superintendent, and to whom great praise is due for his untiring zeal and perseverance in the education of her, and others afflicted in the same manner. I copy it, thinking it will be of interest to the general reader.

“Laura Bridgman was born in Hanover, New Hampshire, on the twenty-first of December, 1829. She is described as having been a very sprightly and pretty infant, with bright blue eyes. She was, however, so puny and feeble until she was a year and a half old, that her parents hardly hoped to rear her. She was subject to severe fits, which seemed

to rack her frame almost beyond her power of endurance; and life was held by the feeblest tenure; but when a year and a half old, she seemed to rally; the dangerous symptoms subsided, and at twenty months old, she was perfectly well.

“Her mental powers, hitherto stunted in their growth, rapidly developed themselves, and during the four months of health which she enjoyed, she appears (making due allowance for a fond mother’s account) to have displayed a considerable degree of intelligence.

“But suddenly she sickened again—her disease raged with great violence during five weeks, when her eyes and ears were inflamed, suppurated, and their contents were discharged. But though sight and hearing were gone forever, the poor child’s sufferings were not ended. The fever raged seven weeks. For five months she was kept in bed in a darkened room. It was a year before she could walk unsupported, and two years before she could sit up all day. It was now observed that her sense of smell was almost entirely destroyed—and, consequently that her taste was much blunted.

“It was not until four years of age that the poor child’s bodily health seemed restored, and she was able to enter upon her apprenticeship of life and the world.

“But what a situation was hers! The darkness and the silence of the tomb were around her. No mother’s smile called forth her answering smile. No father’s voice taught her to imitate his sounds; they, brothers and sisters, were but forms of matter which resisted her touch, but which differed not from the furniture of the house, save in warmth, and in the power of locomotion—and not even in these respects from the dog and the cat.

“But the immortal spirit which had been implanted within her could not die, nor be maimed nor mutilated; and, though most of its avenues of communication with the world were cut off, it began to manifest itself through the others. As soon as she could walk, she began to explore the room, and then the house. She became familiar with the form, density, weight and heat of every article she could lay her hands upon. She followed her mother, and felt her hands and arms, as she was occu-

pied about the house ; and her disposition to imitate, led her to repeat everything herself. She even learned to sew a little and to knit.

“The reader will scarcely need to be told, however, that the opportunities of communicating with her were very, very limited, and that the moral effect of her wretched state soon began to appear. Those who cannot be enlightened by reason, can only be controlled by force—and this, coupled with her great privations, must soon have reduced her to a worse condition than that of the beasts that perish, but for timely and unhopd for aid.

“At this time, I was so fortunate as to hear of the child, and immediately hastened to Hanover to see her. I found her with a well formed figure ; a strongly marked nervous sanguine temperament ; a large and beautifully shaped head, and the whole system in healthy action. The parents were easily induced to consent to her coming to Boston, and on the fourth of October, 1837, they brought her to the Institution.

“For a while she was much bewildered, and after waiting about two weeks, until she

became acquainted with her new locality, and somewhat familiar with the inmates, the attempt was made to give her a knowledge of arbitrary signs, by which she could interchange thoughts with others.

“There was one of two ways to be adopted; either to go on to build up a language of signs on the basis of the natural language which she had already commenced herself, or to teach her the purely arbitrary language in common use; that is to give her a sign for every individual thing; or to give her a knowledge of letters by combination, of which she might express her idea of the existence, and the mode and condition of existence of anything. The former would have been easy, but very ineffectual; the latter seemed very difficult, but if accomplished, very effectual. I determined therefore, to try the latter.

“The first experiments were made by taking articles in common use, such as knives, forks, spoons, keys, &c., and pasting upon them labels, with their names printed in raised letters. These she felt very carefully, and soon, of course, distinguished that the crooked lines

key, differed as much from the crooked lines *spoon*, as the key differed from the spoon in form.

“Then small detached labels, with the same words printed upon them, were put into her hands, and she soon observed that they were similar to the ones pasted on the articles. She showed her perception of this similarity by laying the label *key* upon the key, and the label *spoon* upon the spoon. She was encouraged here by the natural sign of approbation, patting on the head.

“The same process was then repeated with all the articles which she could handle; and she very easily learned to place the proper labels upon them. It was evident, however, that the only intellectual exercise was that of imitation and memory. She recollected that the label *book* was placed upon a book, and she repeated the process first from imitation, next from memory, with only the motive of love of approbation, but apparently without the intellectual perception of any relation between the things.

“After a while, instead of labels, the indi-

vidual letters were given to her on detached bits of paper ; they were arranged side by side so as to spell *book, key &c.* ; then they were mixed up in a heap, and a sign was made for her to arrange them herself, so as to express the words *book, key, &c.* ; and she did so.

“ Hitherto, the process had been mechanical, and the success about as great as teaching a very knowing dog a variety of tricks. The poor child has set in mute amazement, and patiently imitated everything her teacher did ; but now the truth began to flash upon her ; her intellect began to work ; she perceived that here was a way by which she could herself make up a sign of anything that was in her own mind, and show it to another mind, and at once her countenance lighted up with a human expression ; it was no longer a dog or a parrot ; it was an immortal spirit, eagerly seizing upon a new link of union with other spirits ! I could almost fix upon the moment when this truth dawned upon her mind, and spread its light to her countenance. I saw that the great obstacle was overcome, and that henceforward, nothing but patient and perse-

vering, but plain and straightforward efforts were to be used.

“The result, thus far, is quickly related and easily conceived—but not so was the process, for many weeks of apparently unprofitable labor were passed before it was effected.

“When it was said above, that a sign was made, it was intended to say, that the action was performed by her teacher, she feeling his hands, and then imitating the motion.

“The next step was to procure a set of metal types, with the different letters of the alphabet cast upon their ends; also a board, in which were square holes, into which holes she could set the types, so that the letters on their ends could alone be felt above the surface.

“Then, on any article being handed to her, for instance, a pencil or a watch, she would select the component letters and arrange them on her board and read them with apparent pleasure.

“She was exercised for several weeks in this way, until her vocabulary became extensive, and then the important step was taken of

teaching her how to represent the different letters by the position of her fingers, instead of the cumbrous apparatus of the board and types. She accomplished this speedily and easily, for her intellect had begun to work in aid of her teacher, and her progress was rapid.

“This was the period, about three months after she had commenced, and the first report of her case was made, in which it is stated that ‘she has just learned the manual alphabet, as used by the deaf mutes, and it is a subject of delight and wonder to see how rapidly, correctly and eagerly she goes on with her labors. Her teacher gives her a new object, for instance, a pencil ; first lets her examine it and get an idea of its use, then teaches her how to spell it by making the signs for the letters with her own fingers ; the child grasps her hand, and feels her fingers as the different letters are formed. She turns her head a little on one side, like a person listening closely ; her lips are apart ; she seems scarcely to breathe ; and her countenance, at first anxious, gradually changes to a smile as she comprehends a lesson. She then holds up her

tiny fingers and spells the word in the manual alphabet; next, she takes her types and arranges her letters; and last, to make sure that she is right, she takes the whole of the types composing the word, and places them upon or in contact with the pencil, or whatever the object may be.'

"The whole of the succeeding year was passed in gratifying her eager inquiries for the names of every object which she could possibly handle; in exercising her in the use of the manual alphabet; in extending in every possible way her knowledge of the physical relations of things, and in proper care of her health.

"At the end of the year, a report of her case was made, from which the following is an extract:

"It has been ascertained, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that she cannot see a ray of light, cannot hear the least sound, and never exercises her sense of smell, if she have any. Thus her mind dwells in darkness and stillness as profound as that of a closed tomb at midnight. Of beautiful sights, and sweet

sounds and pleasant odors, she has no conception ; nevertheless, she seems as happy and playful as a bird or a lamb, and the employment of her intellectual faculties or the acquirement of a new idea, gives her a vivid pleasure, which is plainly marked in her expressive features. She never seems to repine, but has all the buoyancy and gayety of childhood. She is fond of fun and frolic, and when playing with the rest of the children, her shrill laugh sounds loudest of the group.

“ ‘When left alone, she seems very happy if she have her knitting or sewing, and will busy herself for hours ; if she have no occupation, she evidently amuses herself by imaginary dialogues or by recalling past impressions. She counts with her fingers or spells out names of things which she has recently learned in the manual alphabet of the deaf mutes. In this lonely self-communion she seems to reason, reflect and argue. If she spells a word wrong with the fingers of her right hand, she instantly strikes it with her left, as her teacher does, in sign of disapprobation ; if right, then she pats herself

upon the head, and looks pleased. She sometimes purposely spells a word wrong with her left hand, looks roguish and laughs, and then with the right hand strikes the left, as if to correct it.

“ ‘During the year she has attained great dexterity in the use of the manual alphabet of the deaf mutes, and she spells out the words and sentences which she knows, so fast and so deftly, that only those accustomed to this language can follow with the eye the rapid motions of her fingers.

“ ‘But wonderful as is the rapidity with which she writes her thoughts upon the air, still more so is the ease and accuracy with which she reads the words thus written by another ; grasping their hands in hers and following every movement of their fingers, as letter after letter conveys their meaning to her mind. It is in this way that she converses with her blind playmates, and nothing can more forcibly show the power of mind in forcing matter to its purpose, than a meeting between them. For if great talent and skill are necessary for two pantomimes to paint

their thoughts and feelings by the movements of the body and the expression of the countenance, how much greater the difficulty when darkness shrouds them both, and the one can hear no sound !

“ ‘When Laura is walking through a passageway with her hands spread before her, she knows instantly every one she meets, and passes them with a sign of recognition, but if it be a girl of her own age, and especially if it be one of her favorites, there is instantly a bright smile of recognition, and a twining of arms, a grasping of hands, and a swift telegraphing upon the tiny fingers, whose rapid evolution conveys the thoughts and feelings from the outposts of one mind to those of the other. There are questions and answers, exchanges of joy or sorrow,—there are kissings and partings, just as between little children with their senses.’

“ During this year, six months after she had left home, her mother came to visit her, and the scene of their meeting was an interesting one.

“ The mother stood some time, gazing with

overflowing eyes upon her unfortunate child, who, all unconscious of her presence, was playing about the room. Presently Laura ran against her, and at once began feeling her hands, examining her dress, and trying to find out if she knew her—but not succeeding in this, she turned away as from a stranger, and the poor woman could not conceal the pang she felt at finding that her beloved child did not know her.

“She then gave Laura a string of beads, which she used to wear at home, which were recognized by the child at once, who with much joy, put them around her neck, and sought me eagerly to say she understood the string was from her home.

The mother now tried to caress her, but poor Laura repelled her, preferring to be with her acquaintances.

“Another article from home was now given her, and she began to look much interested. She examined the stranger much closer, and gave me to understand that she knew she came from Hanover; she even endured her caresses, but would leave her with indifference

at the slightest signal. The distress of the mother was now painful to behold, for although she feared that she could not be recognized, the painful reality of being treated with cold indifference by a darling child, was too much for woman's nature to bear.

“After a while, on the mother taking hold of her again, a vague idea seemed to flit across Laura's mind, that this could not be a stranger; she therefore felt her hands very eagerly, while her countenance assumed an expression of intense interest. She became very pale, and then suddenly red. Hope seemed struggling with doubt and anxiety, and never were contending emotions more strongly painted upon the human face. At this moment of painful uncertainty, the mother drew her close to her side and kissed her fondly, when at once the truth flashed upon the child, and all mistrust and anxiety disappeared from her face, as with an expression of exceeding joy, she eagerly nestled to the bosom of her parent, and yielded herself to her fond embraces.

“After this, the beads were all unheeded; the playthings which were offered to her were

utterly disregarded ; her playmates, for whom but a moment before she gladly left the stranger, now vainly strove to pull her from her mother ; and though she yielded her usual instantaneous obedience to my signal to follow me, it was evidently with painful reluctance. She clung close to me as if bewildered and fearful, and when, after a moment, I took her to her mother, she sprang to her arms and clung to her with eager joy.

“The subsequent parting between them showed alike the affection, the intelligence, the resolution of the child.

“Laura accompanied her mother to the door, clinging to her all the way, until they arrived at the threshold, where she paused and felt around, to ascertain who was near her. Perceiving the matron, of whom she is very fond, she grasped her by one hand, holding on convulsively to her mother with the other ; and thus she stood for a moment, then she dropped her mother’s hand ; put her handkerchief to her eyes, and turning around, clung sobbing to the matron, while her mother departed with emotions as deep as those of her child.

“ It has been remarked in former reports, that she can distinguish different degrees of intellect in others, and that she soon regarded almost with contempt, a new comer, when, after a few days, she discovered her weakness of mind. This unaimable part of her character has been more strongly developed during the past year.

“ She chooses for her friends and companions those children who are intelligent and can talk best with her, and she evidently dislikes to be with those who are deficient in intellect, unless, indeed, she can make them serve her purpose, which she is evidently inclined to do. She takes advantage of them and makes them wait upon her, in a manner that she knows she could not exact of others, and in various ways she shows her Saxon blood.

“ She is fond of having other children noticed and caressed by the teachers and those whom she respects, but this must not be carried too far, or she becomes jealous. She wants to have her share, which, if not the lion's, is the greater part, and if she does not get it, she says, *'my mother will love me.'*

“ Her tendency to imitation is so strong that it leads her to actions which must be entirely incomprehensible to her, and which can give no other pleasure than the gratification of an internal faculty. She has been known to sit for half an hour, holding a book before her sightless eyes, and moving her lips as she has observed seeing people do when reading.

“ She one day pretended that her doll was sick, and went through all the motions of tending it and giving it medicine ; she then put it carefully to bed, and placed a bottle of hot water to its feet, laughing all the time most heartily. When I came she insisted upon my going to see it and feel its pulse, and when I told her to put a blister on its back, she seemed to enjoy it amazingly, and almost screamed with delight.

“ Her social feelings and her affections are very strong, and when she is sitting at work or at her studies, by the side of one of her little friends, she will break off from her task every few moments to hug and kiss them with an earnestness and warmth that is touching to behold.

“When left alone, she occupies and apparently amuses herself, and seems quite contented, and so strong seems to be the natural tendency of thought to put on the garb of language, that she often soliloquizes in the *finger language*, slow and tedious as it is. But it is only when alone that she is quiet, for if she becomes sensible of the presence of any one near her, she is restless until she can sit close beside them, hold their hands and converse with them by signs.

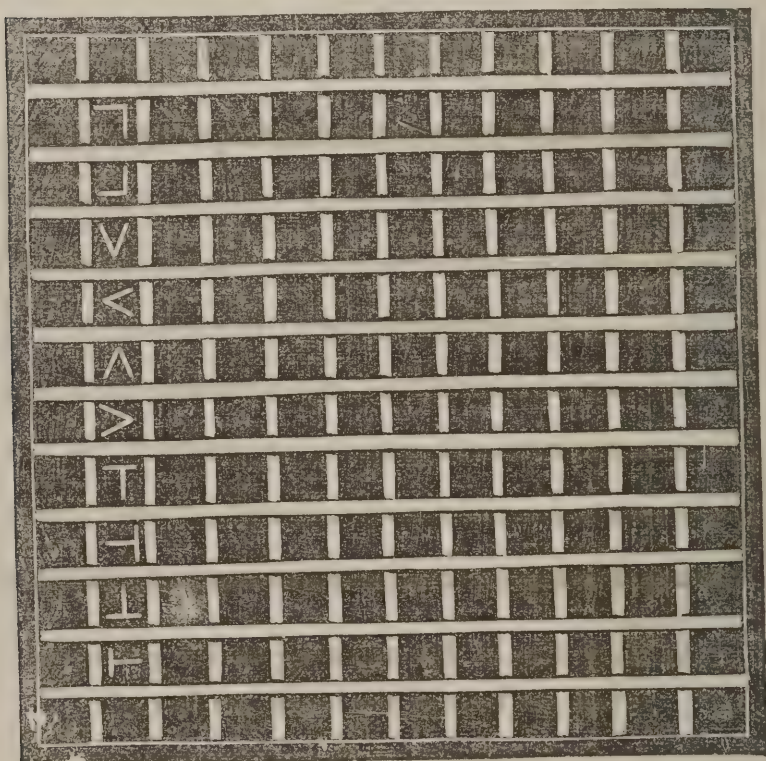
“In her intellectual character it is pleasing to observe an insatiable thirst for knowledge, and a quick perception of the relations of things. In her moral character it is beautiful to behold her continual gladness, her keen enjoyment of existence, her expansive love, her unhesitating confidence, her sympathy with suffering, her conscientiousness, truthfulness, and hopefulness.”

REPRESENTATION
OF THE
WRITING CARD USED BY THE BLIND.



The black lines of this engraving are the grooves in
which the body of the letters are formed.

REPRESENTATION
OF THE
SLATE USED BY THE BLIND.



The black of this engraving are apertures in
which the types are placed.

